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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 28, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVEN M. PALAZZO 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 6, 2015, 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.

JOHN A. BOEHNER, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Speaker of the House, JOHN BOEHNER.

Speaker BOEHNER and I, as some would note, do not always agree. We have been on opposite sides of this floor and on opposite sides of debate many times. However, that is behind us for JOHN BOEHNER.

In all of the years I have served with him, Speaker BOEHNER has shown me the same kindness, grace, and friendship that he has shown so many of his House colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

JOHN BOEHNER is a gentleman in the truest sense of the word and is a leader who, even in the act of stepping back from his position in the leadership, has always put the best interests of our country first.

When it came time to make difficult decisions, even in the face of strong opposition from some in his own party, Speaker BOEHNER was willing to work across the aisle to make sure that this House was achieving its most fundamental responsibilities to those we had the honor of serving.

We did not have a catastrophic default on our debt—at least twice—in large part because of JOHN BOEHNER's determination not to let it happen. Millions of children benefitted from the forms of No Child Left Behind because JOHN BOEHNER, the chairman of the committee, put children's interests first and worked in partnership with the late Senator Ted Kennedy and Congressman George Miller.

That was in the best traditions of a President Bush-sponsored piece of legislation—a Republican chairman, a Democratic chairman, and a ranking Democrat working together on behalf of our country's interest.

JOHN BOEHNER worked to keep his Conference and this House marching forward down a productive path. History will be the judge of his success as the leader of his party, but all of us who have had the honor of serving with him will judge him as we know him—a considerate and thoughtful individual, who is a patriot and who cares deeply about this House and the Nation it serves.

I want to thank him, as I would hope all of our Members would and, frankly, those Members who served with him, but who are not in this House now, for his service and for his friendship.

I want to wish him well and wish him luck out there on the golf course, where I am sure he will be spending a lot more time—I am going to be envious of that—in addition to the time that he will spend with his family and in continuing to serve his community, his State, and his Nation.

JOHN BOEHNER served his country and this House of Representatives with fidelity and responsibility, and we should all thank him for that.

We wish the Speaker and his wife, Debbie, well as they embark on a new phase of their lives. He has served his country well. I am confident that he will continue to do so.

DEBT CEILING BILL FINANCIALLY IRRESPONSIBLE

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

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, Benjamin Franklin advised: ''When you run in debt, you give to another power over your liberty.''

Washington is in the middle of an epic battle between elected officials who, on the one hand, are financially responsible, have the understanding and backbone needed to prevent an American bankruptcy, heed the wisdom of Founding Father Benjamin Franklin, and fight out-of-control debt that threatens our liberty, and you have those elected officials who, on the other hand, are financially irresponsible and are too weak to resist spending money America does not have, has to borrow to get, and can't afford to pay back.

This week Congress faces yet another last-second debt deal, negotiated in secret, sprung at the last moment, that fails the American people by not fixing the cause of the debt ceiling problem: out of control deficits.

Earlier this year America's Comptroller General and the nonpartisan

Congressional Budget Office warned Congress and President Obama that America's current financial path is ''unsustainable,'' meaning that America faces a debilitating insolvency and bankruptcy unless we get our financial house in order.

The CBO issued two other dire warnings:

First, America's debt service costs will increase by, roughly, $600 billion in 10 years. For perspective, $600 billion is more than what America spends on national defense, which begs the question: Where will the money for that additional $600 billion debt payment come from?

Second, the CBO warns that, by 2025, America will face an unending string of annual trillion-dollar deficits, deficits that can only end in a debilitating American insolvency and bankruptcy.

Mr. Speaker, economic principles don't care if you are a family, a business, or a country. If you borrow more money than you can pay back, you go bankrupt.

There are good and bad ways to raise the debt ceiling. Today's debt bill is bad because it not only fails to restrain America's spending addiction, it makes things worse by increasing spending by $80 billion.

I have been in Congress since 2011, when America's debt blew through the $14 trillion mark. Now America's debt is $18 trillion. This debt deal blows America's debt through the $19 trillion mark, meaning America's bank account will soon be $5 trillion weaker than it was in 2011.

Rather than fixing America's deficit problem while we still have the financial ability to do so, this debt deal kicks the can down the road to 2017, when America will be financially weaker and less able to rise to the financial challenge that threatens us.

Mr. Speaker, today's debt bill is akin to a sick patient going to the emergency room and getting pain-killing drugs that make the patient feel better, yet does nothing to cure the disease that kills him. In the real world, that is medical malpractice. Similarly, today's debt bill that makes America feel good, but does nothing to cure our debt disease, is governing malpractice.

President George Washington advised Congress: ''No pecuniary consideration is more urgent than the regular redemption and discharge of the public debt. On none can delay be more injurious.''

George Washington's advice in 1793 is prudent today. Congress and President Obama must balance the budget before America's debt burden spirals out of control, before it is too late to prevent the debilitating insolvency and bankruptcy that awaits us.

Mr. Speaker, I exhort Washington to rise to the challenge and be financially responsible when raising the debt ceiling. The first step is to defeat this debt bill that not only fails to fix a time-critical problem, but that actually makes America's spending addiction $80 billion worse. America's future as a great Nation and a world power depends on it.

I will vote against this debt deal. I urge my colleagues to be financially responsible—do the same—and insist that the debt ceiling be raised only if we simultaneously fix America's addiction to deficit spending. Today's debt ceiling bill fails that benchmark. It threatens America. It should be defeated.

THE BUDGET

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of wrapping up a budget agreement that is welcome since it protects against default on the national debt and prevents draconian cuts for disability payments and unfairness in Medicare premiums for our senior citizens; but it continues a downward spiral in government spending for essential items that would improve America's infrastructure, education, medical research, and much more. Yet, at the same time, we are continuing on autopilot with some of the largest expenditures for generations to come.

We had an announcement yesterday that we will be replacing the next generation of stealth bombers for our nuclear triad—up to 100 of them—at an estimated cost of over $550 million each, and that is just the estimated shelf price, the opening bid, plus another $20 billion in development costs.

Our history of developing weapons of this magnitude is that from the opening bid, the price is likely to spiral much higher in the future. The same contractor, Northrop Grumman, which won this bid, could only build 21 B–2s out of a planned 132 as the costs spiraled to over $1 billion a plane.

This comes at a time when we are committed to spending over $1 trillion in the coming decades in upgrading our nuclear fleet. Think about it: 12 new ballistic missile submarines, up to 100 new long-range, nuclear-capable bombers, 642 new land-based ballistic missiles, 1,000 new nuclear-capable, long-range standoff cruise missiles.

And why are we doing this in the first place?

Think for a moment. These weapons that we have already are far in excess of anything America will ever need—a destructive capacity to obliterate any nation multiple times over—yet, we are moving ahead without ever discussing this spending here on the House floor as to whether or not it is what we need.

Think about the security threats of today in terms of an inability to withstand the devastating impacts of climate change on our communities, the threats from ISIS, different challenges of encroachment from Russia and China—not nuclear attack, but moving ahead in building artificial islands, invading neighboring countries. These are threats now—the Taliban, international terrorism—and we are committed to spending vast sums on weapons that we are never likely to use and are useless against the real threats we face.

We don't need 454 land-based nuclear missiles now. These end up threatening us. Look at the recently released information about the stand-down around Russian paranoia in 1983 regarding NATO exercises. We didn't realize how panicked they were or the steps that they took. That is the real threat from nuclear weapons, accident or miscalculation.

Consider the opportunity costs of vast sums of money that we are tying up that could be used for other purposes, including strengthening our military for today's threats or helping our veterans or our communities on what is bearing down upon them or equipping our citizens to function in this century.

We just had a fascinating lesson when the Export-Import Bank was freed from the iron grasp of the committee and was allowed to actually be debated on the floor of the House. It had been bottled up for years. It had never had that sort of attention. We had more time and energy spent on the Ex-Im Bank over the last 50 hours than, probably, the last 50 years—certainly, in the last 50 months.

What would happen if Congress actually addressed and debated the wisdom of our current nuclear policies and the vast sums of money that are being spent on autopilot that will be chewing a hole in the budget to the detriment of the Department of Defense and everything else?

There is a lesson to be learned, and I hope someday Congress will learn it, because there is a path for a stronger, safer America, for more meaningful, targeted military spending, and for a balanced, thoughtful budget prioritization. If Congress does its job in the open, collectively, the decision becomes easier and the results become better.

□ 1015

CONGRATULATING STUDENTS AT NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the students from Pennsylvania participating in this week's National Future Farmers of America, or FFA, convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

''I believe in the future of agriculture.'' Those are the first words from the FFA creed. The Pennsylvania group is among 60,000 FFA members at this week's convention, participating in a variety of competitions and stressing the importance of agriculture to our Nation.

Among Pennsylvania's State officers attending the convention is Tony Rice. Tony is a student at the Pennsylvania State University's main campus in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, and Tony is one of 52 national officer candidates traveling to Louisville.

Each year, six student members are selected as national officers of the FFA. These young men and women travel as many as 100,000 miles per year, stressing the importance of agriculture, agriculture education, and the FFA. Candidates are judged upon their ability to be effective communicators and team players.

Over the past years, Tony Rice has met with more than 12,000 high school students to address the important role that agriculture plays in Pennsylvania's economy as Pennsylvania's number one industry.

Now, I not only commend Tony Rice for his dedication to the future of this industry but also his fellow FFA members and the educators who have helped these young people, who will be the agricultural leaders of tomorrow, succeed.

END CHILDHOOD HUNGER NOW

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest health challenges facing our country right now is hunger. We have a hunger problem in the United States of America.

For far too long, we have minimized the problem. Some have even ignored the problem. In short, our response has been inadequate. And we have failed to view hunger as a health issue, which it is. For our Nation's youngest and most vulnerable, our children, the negative effects of childhood hunger are pervasive and long-lasting.

So last week I was pleased to see the American Academy of Pediatrics release its newest policy statement which, for the first time, recommends that pediatricians screen all children for food insecurity. The new recommendations consist of two simple questions for pediatricians to ask parents of young children at their annual well visit to identify and address childhood hunger. It also recommends that pediatricians become more familiar with our robust system of antihunger programs at the Federal, State, and local levels. When pediatricians know more about these antihunger programs and the resources they provide, they will be better prepared to help families in need.

Pediatricians are among the most respected, if not the most respected, voices on children's issues; and I hope that, with the AAP's policy statement, more people will start paying attention to the devastating effects of childhood hunger on America's future.

It is shameful that childhood hunger even exists in this country, the richest country in the world, that one in five children lives in a food insecure household, that 17.2 million households in this country struggle with food insecurity, that the only reliable healthy meals some kids receive are the ones they get through school breakfasts or lunches. Their mothers and fathers are forced to skip meals so that their kids can have more to eat because the family simply cannot afford to put enough food on the table.

The harmful effects of hunger on children are well documented: for example, children who live in households that are food insecure get sick more often, recover more slowly from illness, have poorer overall health, and are hospitalized more frequently.

Children and adolescents affected by food insecurity are more likely to be iron deficient, and preadolescent boys dealing with hunger issues have lower bone density. Early childhood malnutrition is also tied to conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease later in life.

Lack of adequate healthy food can impair a child's ability to concentrate and perform well in school and is linked to higher levels of behavioral and emotional problems from preschool through adolescence.

I have personally heard from pediatricians who see kids in the emergency room come in for a common cold that has become much worse because they don't have enough to eat, and their immune systems have been compromised. Stories like these are heartbreaking.

Mr. Speaker, we know that consistent access to adequate nutritious food is one of the best medicines for growing, thriving children. Children's Health Watch, a national network of pediatricians and child health professionals, found that, in comparison to children whose families were eligible but did not receive SNAP, young children whose families received SNAP were significantly less likely to be at risk of being underweight or experiencing developmental delays.

If Members of Congress are not swayed by the moral arguments for ending childhood hunger, they ought to be swayed by the economic ones. Ensuring that our kids have access to enough nutritious food saves money in the form of reduced healthcare costs and helps them become more productive contributors to our economy later in life.

Mr. Speaker, without our robust Federal antihunger programs, there would no doubt be more hungry children in this country.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or WIC, provides nutritious food and support for children and mothers. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, is our Nation's premiere antihunger program and helps millions of low-income families afford to purchase food every month. About half of all SNAP recipients are children. And our school breakfast and lunch programs, summer meals, and Child and Adult Food Care Programs all provide nutritious meals to children in community, child-friendly settings.

We can't forget about the incredible work our food banks, food pantries, and other charities do to provide healthy food for low-income children and their families. Despite the incredible work that they do, charities cannot do it alone. The demand is simply too great. Charities need a strong Federal partner to end hunger in this country.

Mr. Speaker, for a while now, I have been urging the White House to convene a White House conference on food, nutrition, and hunger. We ought to bring antihunger groups, pediatricians, business leaders, teachers, hospitals, farmers, nonprofits, faith leaders, and governmental officials together to come up with a plan to end hunger in this country once and for all. I can think of no more compelling reason to end hunger now than for the health and well-being of America's children.

In closing, I commend the American Academy of Pediatrics for working to solve hunger as a health issue and addressing how it affects our country's greatest resource: our children. We can and we should do more to end hunger now.

ISIS MUST GO

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, it has now been 1,532 days since President Obama said Syria's Bashar Assad must go. Guess what? He is still there.

It has been 789 days since President Obama drew the red line in the sand, so to speak, and told Assad not to use chemical weapons on his own people. Well, he ignored that. And he used chemical weapons, and he continues to use chemical weapons and kill his own people.

What we are seeing in Syria—the rise of ISIS, the refugee crisis of tens of thousands of people, children having to migrate northward to get out of Syria, the civil war—are all the direct results of the President's unwillingness to stand by his word.

Now Russia is in Syria. They are telling the U.S. on our own soil that America is weak. Look at what they have done in Ukraine. We didn't do anything but give rhetoric and words. Nothing to push Putin back to where he should be.

America is losing her standing in the world, and we would rather appease our enemies than show our strength. This administration still has no strategy for handling ISIS, no tangible plan for defeating Assad, and seemingly no will to stand up to Russia's aggression.

Assad must go. ISIS must go. ISIS must be defeated. America must stand firm and show the world we are a force to be reckoned with, not to be trampled on.

DYSLEXIA AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, October is Dyslexia Awareness Month. It is part of the broader Learning Disabilities Month. This is the time we focus on learning disabilities, particularly in our students and our own children and many who suffer from learning disabilities.

I am emphasizing Dyslexia Awareness Month because I have dyslexia. Growing up, it was very hard being a student that couldn't read well, couldn't spell, couldn't write. I was very ashamed of that. I was shy. I didn't know how to ask for help, but I had a lot of support in my home.

My mother and father didn't really know how to treat it. We didn't even know how to diagnose it in the early ages. I became withdrawn and embarrassed to go to class, particularly to get up and to have to read in front of the class and to spell in front of the class. I still have trouble doing that. Thanks to loving parents and to supportive teachers, I am here.

I share my story because we need to remove the stigma attached to learning disabilities. No student should have to sit in silence being ashamed, being afraid to ask for help.

I had a high school biology teacher, Enid Larson, a person whom I actually wanted to grow up and be like and be a high school biology teacher, who taught me I could accomplish anything. I think I studied sciences because so much of science was memorization and not having to write a lot of papers and not having to read in front of the class.

I pass that same message along because one in five children with learning disabilities or attention issues has to know that it is not because they have a low IQ. They don't. In fact, some of the brightest people in history have had these learning disabilities. It isn't because you are different. It means that you are unique. It means that, with the right help, support, and love, you can accomplish many things. You can cope with your disability.

Many Members of Congress are dyslexic or have children who are dyslexic, and so many that we have actually formed a Congressional Dyslexic Caucus. I am urging you to ask your Member of Congress, if they have not been a member of that caucus, to join it.

I ask for you to ask your school districts what help they are bringing to kids with disabilities and particularly for dyslexic students.

I encourage the students to speak out. You may be shy about reading, but that shouldn't be affecting your speaking. You should speak out about what you feel and what you want.

Dyslexia is a reading and spelling disorder, but you can develop coping skills. With that, you can overcome your shame and your shyness. After all, many of us in Congress have done that, and that is why I am speaking today and not reading.

FISHER CENTER FOR ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research Foundation on their 20th anniversary. To date, the Fisher Center has raised tens of millions of dollars in private funds in the quest to find a cure for this heartbreaking disease that affects millions of families across the country and around the world.

Mr. Zachary Fisher created the foundation in 1995, with the single mission of finding a cure for Alzheimer's through scientific discovery. Since then, the research scientists at the Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research at Rockefeller University, led by Nobel laureate Dr. Paul Greengard, have made remarkable strides, advancing groundbreaking research. But there is, of course, much more work to be done to defeat this debilitating disease.

Mr. Speaker, as I rise to recognize the foundation's leadership in the fight to cure Alzheimer's, I must also recognize Mr. Fisher's many other charitable endeavors that have transformed and touched the lives of those who serve our Nation in uniform.

Mr. Fisher was deeply committed to supporting the men and women of our Armed Forces, and our veterans as well. In that light, he founded the Fisher House Foundation, which provides housing to the families of our veterans and our servicemen while a loved one receives medical treatment. Additionally, Mr. Fisher founded the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in New York City.

□ 1030

But the cause for which I rise today is to urge my colleagues once again and to urge the Nation once again to focus on the profound need to increase Alzheimer's research and to recognize the equally profound work that the Fisher Center has done to ultimately advance and find a cure.

With 5.3 million Americans suffering from Alzheimer's, we must do more. Left unchecked, Alzheimer's will continue to dramatically impact countless lives and families across the country. Left unchecked, Alzheimer's could cost our Nation $1.1 trillion annually by 2050.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in the fight to find a cure for Alzheimer's, and I rise today to thank the Fisher Center Foundation for leading this charge by funding groundbreaking research to finally end this disease.

PRESERVING OUR PLANET

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

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to direct our attention to the importance of preserving our planet and what we should do to address the issue of the changes going on in our climate.

Protecting our environment and addressing climate change are issues which are important to all of our cities across the United States. In fact, at a very local level, many of our communities are working on these issues because they face them directly head on.

For the Latino community, like other communities, we are family-oriented, and we want to provide a better future for our generations to come. That includes leaving our planet better—better—for our grandchildren and their children.

As the Latino population continues to increase in the United States—we are about one out of every four, and they say that in another 30 or 40 years, we will be one out of every three Americans—our exposure to climate change and the risks of pollution are even more important because our ZIP Codes—where we live, where the Latino community lives—are where we are highest at risk.

It is estimated that close to 50 percent of all Latino Americans live in counties that frequently violate ground-level ozone standards. It just doesn't affect Latinos, by the way. Asian Americans tend to also live in those ZIP Codes.

What that means is that we are breathing dirtier air than most Americans, and we have more respiratory illness. Poor environmental protections affect the food that we feed our children, the air that our families breathe, and the water that we drink.

Since I was elected to Congress almost 20 years ago, I have worked tirelessly to work in Orange County—where I live and where I represent—to help get some green projects in, both in Orange County and in California.

For example, I have fought to maintain the funding for the Pacific Crest Trail, which serves residents of the entire West Coast and visitors from around the world. Of course, I am an avid hiker; so, I love that trail.

In fact, in this Congress, I cosponsored legislation which would permanently extend the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which ensures the conservation of national parks, rivers, and streams. It provides grants to local parks and to recreation projects.

One of the things it does is try to ensure that, for example, California, being so long in length, you could start at the southern portion of California and actually walk through wilderness all the way to the Oregon border.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a bipartisan program. That is why it kind of distresses me a little bit

that we, as a Congress, haven't funded it, because it is incredibly important, especially in urban areas, such as my district, where there is little natural environment left and where we need open space and green parks.

It is where Latinos go to have their barbecues. It is where we have our family gatherings. It is incredibly important to us. Sometimes we live in pretty cramped conditions, and we need that outdoor space, even if it is in an urban area. Places like Pearson and Pioneer Park in my hometown of Anaheim or Centennial Park in Santa Ana or our beautiful Santa Ana Zoo have all been made possible by the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what the total cost to taxpayers for these wonderful developments are? Zero. The land and water conservation comes at no cost to the taxpayer, but it benefits them immensely. And, still, this House has failed to fund this. It expired on September 30.

Mr. Speaker, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is another example of a commonsense—commonsense—bipartisan program on which this House has neglected to act.

So I ask the Members of the House, can you go back to the people of your district and say to them: Oh, I don't really care about your parks. I don't really care about the environment. I don't care about where you hang out with your families? This Congress has to act. We should act together on this because it is incredibly important to our families.

I will leave you with a quote, another one from one of my favorite people, His Holiness Pope Francis: ''I call for a courageous and responsible effort to 'redirect our steps' and to avert the most serious effects of the environmental deterioration caused by human activity. I am convinced that we can make a difference.'' I am sure.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 754. An act to improve cybersecurity in the United States through enhanced sharing of information about cybersecurity threats, and for other purposes.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO END BREAST CANCER

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, and today I wish to honor those fighters, survivors, and families it impacts, such as the Edwards family of Washington Crossing, Bucks County. Tracy Edwards was just 47 years old, a wife, mother, daughter, sister, and a courageous fighter to the end.

The American Cancer Society estimates that nearly 300,000 new cases of breast cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year. It is critical that we understand that the battle against this disease does not end when the pink ribbons go away.

I fully understand the vital role leaders play here in Washington every day in supporting groundbreaking research and that we must fight for better treatments, finding a cure, and ultimately defeating breast cancer. Let's work together to end it once and for all.

OUR NATION'S MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, for too long we have neglected mental health in our Nation, leaving many to suffer with little hope. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in our rural communities.

According to reports, more than 60 percent of rural Americans are living in areas that are experiencing shortages in mental health professionals. More than 90 percent of practicing psychologists and psychiatrists in this country work exclusively in metropolitan areas. More than 65 percent of rural Americans rely solely on their primary care providers for mental health care. In most rural communities, the primary mental health crisis responder is a law enforcement officer, despite not being a medical specialist.

All across rural America patients continue to face longer wait times, difficulty accessing care, and long-distance travel just to access subpar care by professionals, through no fault of their own, not even adequately trained to diagnose and treat mental health issues. In Shasta County, in my district, there is evidently only one psychiatrist in the area, while there is an estimated 4,000 patients with mental health needs.

In addition, the lack of mental healthcare facilities, such as the shortage of inpatient beds and space, leaves patients stuck with longer wait times in the emergency room before they can even see a health professional with no other options.

While the President's healthcare law attempted to make strides in this area by including behavioral health coverage, this system is fundamentally and fatally flawed.

While continuing to throw Federal funding at it may serve as a temporary Band-Aid for the symptoms of this crisis, it does nothing to address the root of the problem. One-size-fits-all, top-down systems do not work, especially in rural America.

If we continue to stand by the status quo, our rural patients will continue to suffer and, in many unfortunate cases, end up suicidal, homeless, or in prison, placing an even greater financial burden on our communities.

For this reason, I am proud to support H.R. 2646, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2015. I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania for introducing this sorely needed bill. It is said the first step to fixing a problem is acknowledging there is one, and that is exactly what this bill does.

We spend approximately $130 billion on mental health every year, yet our country still faces a shortage of nearly 100,000 psychiatric beds. Three of the largest mental health hospitals are, in fact, criminal incarceration facilities.

For every 2,000 children with a mental health disorder, only one child psychiatrist is available. Outdated HIPAA privacy laws continue to prevent families and doctors from getting their loved ones and patients the care they need.

Our mental health system is broken, but it certainly does not have to be. H.R. 2646 is a great step in rebuilding the system to one that works to empower patients and families with the access to care and services they need.

It brings accountability to the system to ensure every Federal dollar is going to evidence-based standards, improves quality, and expands access to behavioral health in our community health clinics while advancing telepsychiatry in areas with limited access to mental health professionals, and, importantly, ends the outdated prohibition on physicians volunteering at clinics and federally qualified health centers.

In addition, it provides more beds for those in need of immediate care or those experiencing a crisis and improves alternatives to institutionalization so patients can access the treatment they need, while it helps us decrease the incarceration rates, homelessness, and recurring ER visits. These are just a few of the sorely needed reforms included in H.R. 2646.

I want to stand today to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY), for his leadership in introducing this bill and urge my colleagues to lend their support of this responsible measure to help fix this broken system.

ISSUES OF CONCERN TO ALL AMERICANS

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 commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month. As a breast cancer survivor, I want to add to my sisters and brothers my appreciation for their strength and determination and my respect to those families whose loved ones did not survive the battle.

I am very grateful that, out of this awareness, we have begun to focus on more research for breast cancer remedies and solutions. I introduced a bill

dealing with triple-negative breast cancer, which is the most deadly breast cancer and impacts women and minority women to the extent that their lifespan is shortened.

I rise today to indicate and to ask for renewed commitment by this Congress to focus on more research to bring an end to the forms of breast cancer that have been so deadly, in particular, to women.

I want to thank the U.S. Department of Defense for working with me on providing and supporting legislation that I offered and introduced to provide the research, but also the care for military women who have had breast cancer during their service in the United States military.

It is also Domestic Violence Month, and I acknowledge again the privilege I had to serve on the Committee on the Judiciary and to work with Chairman Hyde in the early stages of introducing and reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act. So many strides have been made.

In particular, I want to acknowledge the many agencies in Houston that have helped women—and, in some instances, men—who have been victims of domestic violence and abuse, in particular, the Houston Area Women's Center that has provided service. I served on the board previously, and I appreciate their service. We want to say to those women—and maybe men—do not suffer alone. Seek help and seek help now.

□ 1045

Mr. Speaker, today we will be looking at the culmination of discussions that have presented themselves as a budget that would end some form of sequester and would raise the debt limit until March 15, 2017.

As a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, I am committed to certain principles that I believe help all of America, and those are: the end to sequestration; the saving of Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare; not eliminating any executive orders or toxic riders undermining, for example, the issues of dealing with our broken immigration system; and the evenness of defense and non-defense sequester relief. We have begun that journey.

I also made a commitment to my seniors that we would fight against the horrific increases that were about to take place under Medicare part D. Those numbers were going to be onerous and burdensome on our seniors, and I will offer them in just a moment.

In addition, let me say that the compromise generates $80 billion of sequester increases over 2 years, with the increase split evenly between defense and non-defense programs, and an additional $16 billion in discretionary funding over a 2-year period. I am hoping that this will help many.

As I indicated, I am supporting breast cancer research. It will help the National Institutes of Health. It will help fill the seats for so many parents who need Head Start resources for their children.

Having traveled with my congressional colleagues, I know that diplomatic security is a vital component to protecting our Foreign Service officers. And then it will improve, if you will, the day-to-day functions of this government.

I am glad, as I indicated, with respect to the Medicare part B premiums, that we will not see the 54 percent increase that I think was the number, and that the increase will be somewhere around 18 to 20 percent. We want it to be zero.

I want my seniors to know that we are continuing to fight as your increases in prescription drugs and service under Medicare part D continue to go down. And, might I just add, that I believe it is important, in addition, that we negotiate the decreasing price of prescription drugs. If you talk to any individual, what they will say is their highest cost, part of their highest cost, whether it is seniors or families, is the cost of prescription drugs. So I think it is very important.

I think I want to look more into, Mr. Speaker, the Social Security disability fix that is in this budget to ensure that no one sees any loss and cuts in their benefits. We just can't stand for that. Social Security recipients, as much as people want to clarify them as some having perpetrated fraud, they do not, Mr. Speaker.

As I close, let me say I want to protect those who are disabled. We are going to continue to look at this, even down to the moment of voting, to make sure that the budget brings about success and help and not harm.

I ask my colleagues to be deliberative in this debate.

LET'S KEEP OUR ATHLETES HEALTHY

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to all the student athletes, the parents of student athletes, athletic trainers, and coaches out there: Sports build character. I want to make sure we are using technology, science, data analytics, and best practices to keep our student athletes practicing, performing, and competing in a safe and responsible manner.

I recall, as a former high school and college athlete, the pregame and prepractice routines that my coaches used to require before we could start to play. And while sports provide great enjoyment for athletes, fans, and coaches, they also pose health risks; some of them are unavoidable, but some are preventable.

By utilizing data and technology, we can establish best practices so our athletes can remain healthy and compete, and our sports teams can succeed. We can do that and still make certain injuries more preventable in the process.

In 2015, we have watches that provide real-time data on our heart rate, caloric intake, and blood pressure to smartphones that can then be shared with coaches, parents, and physicians; and that is just an Apple iWatch or a Fitbit.

Data analytics and sports go hand in hand these days, from mathematical algorithms as to what quarterback will be most successful on a Sunday afternoon, to the data of building a winning baseball team.

Today's athletic success is fueled by skills, knowledge, and teamwork, both on and off the field. Just as we find ways to incorporate technology and data to ensure our next generation of athletes can remain healthy and playing well into old age, we must also encourage investments in the research, innovation, and technology to continue to build upon these already great achievements.

One aspect of this can be found in using data analytics to better understand athletic injuries in our children and student athletes: for example, preemptively identifying vulnerabilities and assessing the lasting impact of other injuries so we can design equipment and enforce rules to most effectively avoid the likelihood of such injuries, but do so without compromising the integrity of the competitive sports we all enjoy watching or participating in.

Health professionals, coaches, trainers, and parents can utilize this data to bring about greater awareness of sound practices that can keep our student athletes healthy and in the game, not on the sidelines.

Every preseason we read in our local newspaper about a student athlete who suffered a concussion during football or soccer practice. In 2013 alone, over 1.2 million children visited emergency rooms for sports-related injuries, and nearly 8 percent of these emergency room visits were concussion-related.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to introduce H. Res. 112, a resolution, the Secondary School Student Athletes' Bill of Rights, which encourages greater communication, coordination, and teamwork among coaches, parents, teachers, and medical professionals to ensure that our children receive adequate training, safe equipment and facilities, and immediate, onsite injury assessment.

The very data and tools we use to generate information like RBIs or yards per carry can be used to study incidence of injury, the impact of certain dietary habits on developing athletes, better training practices, and a host of ways to improve the safe and responsible athletic experience for our youngest athletes.

With the support of over 100 diverse organizations dedicated to improving the health of our student athletes, including the National Athletic Trainers Association, the American Football Coaches Association, the American Heart Association, the National Association of State Boards of Education,

and the American Academy of Pediatrics, H. Res. 112 is just one step towards encouraging and emphasizing the use, sharing, and incorporation of data and innovation in improving the safety of athletes and avoiding injury.

While that effort deals with on-the-field success of our student athletes, just as important is making sure we are giving our next generation the tools they need in innovation and analytics. In Congress, we should enable continued research by making a commitment to providing the next generation of innovators with the tools to learn, develop, and ultimately succeed.

Indeed, STEM skills, the foundation of innovation, lies in a dynamic, motivated, and a well-educated workforce equipped with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. As a member of the Congressional STEM Caucus, I will continue to be an advocate for continued funding of STEM curriculum in schools so that we can equip the next generation of scientists and mathematicians with the tools to succeed. STEM classroom lessons can be applied to sports and the data-collection process. Our STEM students will play a major role in leading the way for greater success on the field.

The bottom line, we must all work together to continue to keep our favorite athletes and our children and our teams on the field and in the game, prevent injuries, and encourage lifelong habits that will allow our children to lead healthier lives. By encouraging the use of technology, we can ensure our student athletes, our athletic trainers, our parents, and our coaches have the tools needed to keep our athletes healthy and on the field instead of on the sidelines.

RESULTS OF THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

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

Mr. TROTT. Mr. Speaker, here in Congress we deal with a great number of different matters, and we vote. Sometimes we win, and sometimes we lose. But I thought it was worth spending a moment this morning to take a look at how the Iran nuclear deal is going. We are 10 days since the deal has been formally adopted, and here is the update:

The Supreme Leader has already begun redefining and testing the agreement. Earlier this month, Iran tested its new ballistic missile. The missile has a 1,000-mile range, can carry a 1,600-pound payload. The only practical use for this ballistic missile is to carry a nuclear warhead.

The day after the test, Iran convicted The Washington Post journalist they have been holding. The day after that, Iran arrested, apparently, an American businessman.

In recent weeks, Iran has begun partnering with Russia to undermine our policy and goals in Syria. And, of course, Iran continues to hold the four Americans.

This deal was predicated on Iran changing its rogue behavior. We are 10 days into this deal, and so far, I have to say, we are not off to a very good start.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

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

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that constituents know why their Members vote for and against different things.

Yesterday, we saw the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank, and I voted ''no'' on that. Of course, I, like probably every single Member of Congress, have businesses in the district that I represent that use the Export-Import Bank to further their business, hire their employees, and help their community.

So why would somebody vote against the Export-Import Bank? I am here to tell you why.

We have a tradition in America of a free-market value and its wanted standing in the world. It is not by a corrupt system of cronyism and political favor, and that is what the Export-Import Bank is to me.

Unfortunately, while many small businesses in every community use the Export-Import Bank, fully 98 percent of businesses don't use the Export-Import Bank to do their exporting—98 percent. But that is not really the issue. The issue is other things.

For instance, between 2007 and 2014, more than 51 percent of all Ex-Im subsidies benefited just 10—10—corporations. One in particular benefited from $66.7 billion in subsidies during the past 7 years.

We can't fix Social Security, and we can't afford our military. But we can sure afford for 10 corporations to get 51 percent, because it is not really about the small business in your community, generally speaking. As a matter of fact, foreign firms that receive most of Ex-Im financing are large corporations that primarily purchase exports from U.S. conglomerates, not from Main Street businesses.

Five of the top 10 buyers are state-controlled and rake in millions of dollars from their own governments, in addition to Ex-Im Bank subsidies that the taxpayers are on the hook for.

Five of 10 are involved in exploration, development, and production of oil or natural gas, these foreign firms collecting subsidies from American taxpayers at the same time that this administration is restricting domestic oil and gas operations right here at home. Consequently, the Federal Government has doubly disadvantaged U.S. energy firms through excessive regulation and Ex-Im Bank subsidies granted to foreign competitors.

Now, sometimes in Washington it is not what you know, but it is who you know. Of the 16 members of the Ex-Im Bank's 2014 advisory committee, half, fully half, were executives at companies or unions that directly benefited from Ex-Im financing during their term—fully half.

Does that sound remotely suspicious to anybody?

Another five members represent companies or unions that received Ex-Im assistance shortly before they joined, and I will give you an example.

Since 2011, former Energy Secretary and New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson has held a seat on Spanish energy company Abengoa's international advisory board. Shortly after joining the firm, Mr. Richardson was appointed to the Ex-Im advisory board, right around the same time the two Ex-Im Bank loans benefiting Abengoa were issued. Fascinating coincidence. Those taxpayer-backed loans totaled around $150 million.

Supporters of Ex-Im argue that the advisory committee members being associated with their beneficiaries is a positive feature. To the contrary, I think it shows that a corporate cronyism atmosphere exists at Ex-Im and will continue to exist at Ex-Im.

The office of the IG and the GAO, the Government Accountability Office, repeatedly document mismanagement, dysfunction within Ex-Im, including inefficient policies and procedures to guard against waste, fraud, and abuse.

□ 1100

Fully 124 investigations have been initiated between October 2007 and March 2014, as well as 792 separate claims involving more than $500 million, and 74 administrative actions since April of 2009 in which bank officials were forced to act internally on the basis of investigations by the inspector general.

The Congressional Budget Office reported that Ex-Im programs actually operate at a deficit, because we also are told that it makes the American taxpayer money; but we don't really know, because they use their own accounting system not used anywhere else. Actually, the CBO says that will cost taxpayers $2 billion in the next decade.

And you wonder why certain Members of Congress don't vote for this thing. It is not about the small businesses in our communities that are trying to do a good job and play by the rules, because they are doing a good job and playing by the rules. But there is a bigger issue here. There is more to the story.

The new bill that we just passed guarantees an audit every 4 years—every 4 years. But keep in mind that Ex-Im currently has around 30 open investigations, 75 years of combined prison time, 90 criminal indictments and complaints, 49 criminal judgments, more than $223 million in court-ordered fines and restitution, and I could go on.

Mr. Speaker, the Ex-Im Bank doesn't do everything it could for small business, but it does a lot for people that

know people in this town. That is why it must be reformed or ended.

UNRWA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, for years, I have been pushing for the United States to reexamine its relationship with UNRWA, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency.

UNRWA employs individuals affiliated with Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization that openly and loudly incites violence against Israel; yet the United States—which means the U.S. taxpayer—sends nearly $300 million a year to this organization, to UNRWA without questioning, without scrutiny.

Just last week, the U.N. quietly suspended several individuals after allegations of incitement were brought forth from the NGO U.N. Watch. And we thank U.N. Watch for carefully looking over this organization.

These allegations, Mr. Speaker, are just the tip of the iceberg. We must not continue to send taxpayer dollars to UNRWA—again, that is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency—and, subsequently, to individuals tied to the terror group Hamas in violation of our laws.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, I reintroduced my bill that would stop all U.S. contributions to UNRWA until the organization purges its payroll of individuals who incite violence against Israel and until that organization ends all its affiliations with Hamas. Is that really too much to ask, that we should demand that before U.N. agencies get one penny of U.S. taxpayer money that they must not incite violence and that they must no longer affiliate themselves with a U.S.-designated terrorist organization?

So I urge my colleagues to support this measure, to sign on as cosponsors, and to lead in the effort to fight the incitement to violence against Israel.

HONORING JACINTO ACEBAL

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to an extraordinary south Floridian and one of the most highly decorated veterans of the Vietnam war, my dear friend Jacinto Acebal.

Just last January, Mr. Acebal—or ''Ace,'' as we all call him—was diagnosed with larynx cancer. The news hit Ace like a ton of bricks; and, like so many others diagnosed with this horrible disease, the chances of a favorable outcome looked disheartening.

However, no stranger to tough situations, Ace made a commitment to his family that he was not going without a fight. After a total of 8 chemotherapy sessions, 33 radiation treatments, and 3 different surgeries, Ace is no longer bedridden and has been declared cancer-free.

So I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Jacinto ''Ace'' Acebal on this incredible milestone and wishing him many years of good health throughout his life.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 5 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

Bishop Mar Awa Royel, Assyrian Church of the East, Salida, California, offered the following prayer:

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; Amen.

Father of mercy and God of every consolation, we come to You at this hour asking You to bless our civil servants as they labor for our country and its citizens. Grant them Your wisdom and enlighten them with Your truth that they might serve the greater good of our country.

Strengthen them to be instruments of peace and justice in our society today. May they bring about reconciliation and hope in our communities and neighborhoods, and may they be exemplary citizens and servants to their constituents, without distinction of race or creed.

Father, we ask You to bless our land, which has been a beacon of hope and a refuge for the oppressed and the marginalized. Grant freedom to the captive, relief to the suffering, and help us all to construct a better and safer tomorrow for our future generations of Americans.

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.

Mrs. WALORSKI. 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.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DELBENE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. DELBENE 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.

WELCOMING BISHOP MAR AWA ROYEL

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor today to introduce to the House our guest chaplain, Bishop Mar Awa Royel.

Bishop Royel currently presides over the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East's Diocese of California and serves as Secretary of the Holy Synod. He was consecrated as a Bishop in 2008 and is the first American-born Bishop of the Assyrian Church of the East.

Bishop Royel is one of five trustees of the Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organization. He is also the president of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations and Educational Development.

I have been honored to know Bishop Royel and work with him to help raise awareness of the plight of Assyrians in the Middle East who are facing unspeakable violence and persecution. Many Central Valley residents have family members who are suffering under ISIL's campaign of terror. I am thankful for Bishop Royel's efforts. Bishop Royel is a gifted speaker, esteemed author, and leader of California's large and faithful Assyrian community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in welcoming him today. We thank him for offering this afternoon's opening prayer in the United States House of Representatives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HONORING PAULA NICHOLS

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

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize South La Porte County Special Education Cooperative Director Paula Nichols for her dedication to providing services to nearly

1,500 students of varying disabilities. The co-op employs 97 teachers and 50 paraprofessionals, ensuring that students receive high-quality instruction and have positive learning experiences.

Currently, the demand for qualified teachers, especially in special ed, is increasing at a pace far greater than existing communities can produce. My thanks for Paula's dedication.

This co-op provides students with services that empower students to become active members of society based on their individual strengths and abilities. Last year, I visited the South La Porte County Special Education Cooperative and saw firsthand the great work of this organization.

I am grateful to Paula Nichols and the co-op for working with parents, schools, students, and the community to create an environment that celebrates and embraces individuality and accommodates diverse learning needs. Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Paula Nichols for her tireless dedication to students in La Porte County.

PROTECTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND STALKING VICTIMS ACT

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This month is a time for all of us to examine the work that must be done so that every American can live free from the fear of domestic violence.

All of us would do well this month to consider the destructive role that guns can and do play in incidents of domestic violence. From 2001 until 2012, 6,410 women were killed by a gun wielded by an intimate partner. That number is nearly 1,100 more than the total number of American soldiers who were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan over the same time period.

Despite this fact, many domestic abusers can still legally purchase a gun. There is no Federal prohibition to prevent the sale of a gun to someone convicted of a misdemeanor crime in a dating partner relationship or someone convicted of misdemeanor stalking offenses.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act, which Congresswoman LOIS CAPPS has introduced, to close these loopholes immediately.

Let's get to work to end this epidemic and protect the lives of women across our country during Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

OXI DAY

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because 75 years ago this week, the Nazis were sweeping through Europe with frightening ease. This was the backdrop on the early morning of October 28, 1940, when the Axis forces requested a meeting with the Greek Prime Minister, Ioannis Metaxas.

The Axis' agenda for the meeting was a short one. They came with only one simple demand: Greece must unconditionally surrender and allow the Axis forces unfettered use of strategic military sites or the Greek people would face war.

The Axis forces clearly underestimated the resolve of the Greeks. Prime Minister Metaxas shocked the Axis powers by giving his now famous one-word answer: ''Oxi.''

While others in Europe were choosing to stay out of the conflict in hopes that they would be spared, the Greeks willingly inserted themselves into the fray, costing hundreds of thousands of Greek lives, but saving millions by continually stifling the Axis forces.

Greece's refusal saved countless lives as Greek forces fought heroically; but Greece paid a terrible price as well, losing practically an entire generation of men and women.

As we remember Oxi Day and the bravery of the Greek people, let us also remember the millions of Greeks who perished so that Hitler might be stopped.

TRINITY RIVER MISSION

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Trinity River Mission for their dedicated efforts to ensure that all children can achieve academic success. I recently visited Trinity River Mission and was so moved and impressed by what I saw and learned.

Today, the Trinity River Mission is a volunteer-based community learning center, servicing the educational needs of children, youth, and families in West Dallas. The organization provides a safe environment, nutritional meals, and an after-school program to support youth in grades K through 12 at absolutely no cost to their families.

What I saw that day was hundreds of kids and volunteers like Dolores Sosa Green, Rosie Cisneros, and other volunteers who have come back to the community to work with these kids to show them that they can achieve anything through education.

BREE SANDLIN

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

I would like to share the story of a breast cancer survivor I met last week at home. Her name is Bree Sandlin. She is married to Stephen. They have two sons, Beck and Elliott. Elliott is a master Lego engineer.

On July 25, 2012, Bree was diagnosed with stage III triple-negative breast cancer. After major surgery and chemotherapy, Bree was cancer free by February 13, 2013.

A proud Texas Aggie, Bree has embraced life after her cancer. She climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, 19,341 feet above sea level. This past Sunday, she ran the Marine Corps Marathon with a time of 5 hours, 39 minutes, and 10 seconds.

We can beat breast cancer. Just ask Bree Sandlin.

LGBT HISTORY MONTH

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, as LGBT History Month draws to a close, I rise today to recognize Chicago LGBT activist Henry Gerber, a man well ahead of his time.

Mr. Gerber founded the Society for Human Rights in 1924. It was the first chartered gay rights organization in the United States. His home in Chicago's north side, my district, served as the society's headquarters, and from there he published the first-known gay interest periodical in the U.S.

Unfortunately, his activism carried risks. Less than a year after he founded the society, police raided his home, arrested him, and confiscated his possessions. He was put on trial three times. Although he was never convicted of a crime, he lost his life savings, his reputation, and his job.

Thankfully, our country has come a long way in the fight for equality, but we can all learn from Henry Gerber's struggle for human rights in the face of overwhelming adversity.

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT COLONEL TIMOTHY REDDY

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Reddy, a resident of Baldwin County, Alabama.

Colonel Reddy graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1976 and was Active-Duty military for 23 years, including a combat tour with the 82nd Airborne Division in Grenada.

Following his military service, Colonel Reddy began a 15-year career teaching math and coaching soccer and swim team at Fairhope High School in my district. He was known for pushing his students to the next level and making them better people. I can personally attest to Colonel Reddy's teaching ability because my children were his students and they considered him one of their all-time favorite teachers. And he was tough.

So on behalf of Alabama's First Congressional District, I want to share our deepest condolences with Colonel Reddy's loved ones. He was a great American and an extraordinary educator. Colonel Reddy made a positive impact in the lives of so many, and his legacy will live on in his students, his family, and his friends.

□ 1215

FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH

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

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Farm to School Month. Having healthy foods in our schools is crucial. We know that, when students are provided with wholesome foods, they are more likely to pay attention in class and to learn. In addition, by introducing kids to a variety of fruits and vegetables at a young age, we can teach them how to eat healthy over the long term.

We are fortunate in my district to have farmers who grow some of the best food in the world. If our children know where their food comes from, they are also more likely to be passionate and connected to their food choices.

Across our region hundreds of different fruits and vegetables are grown. These crops provide fresh, quality foods to our schools. Why buy berries from another State when we can purchase them from our local farmers?

I strongly support the efforts of our local Farm to School movement and recognize those working to increase access to nutritious foods in schools.

WORKING TOWARDS A CURE

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, the month of October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and I rise today to call attention and awareness to this disease and to recognize the many women and men in America who are fighting it.

The American Cancer Society estimates that more than 230,000 women and 2,350 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year and over 40,000 women and men will, sadly, lose their battle.

Every day brilliant researchers in our country are working towards a cure. We must honor their commitment with full funding of the National Institutes of Health to ensure that we are meeting our commitment to them and the millions of lives affected by cancer each year.

That is why I supported the 21st Century Cures bill that passed the House earlier this year with a majority of each party in support. That is also why I am renewing my call to double NIH funding over the coming decade to recruit, retain, and invest in the people and research that will save lives, grow our economy, and save us trillions.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the ''moonshot,'' as our Vice President called it earlier this week. It is time for this Congress to make curing cancer its signature priority.

LET'S CLOSE THE LOOPHOLES

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

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, what do the mayors of cities like Houston, Texas; Tallahassee, Florida; and Portland, Maine, have in common? They all support closing loopholes in our background check laws, loopholes that let convicted felons and those with severe mental illness buy deadly weapons. That is just one of the findings from Politico magazine's recent ''What Works'' survey of mayors from across the country.

In red States and in blue States in every part of this country, 90 percent of mayors say they want stronger background checks, 86 percent say they want the gun show loophole closed, and 78 percent want those subject to restraining orders barred from ever buying guns. It is no surprise why.

America's mayors witness up close the gun violence that plagues our country every day. They know the victims of the homicides, the suicides, the accidental shootings, and the domestic gun violence that leave families forever shattered. They know how hollow the gun lobby sounds when it says there is nothing we can do to prevent more tragedies, and they know that it is within the power of this Congress to fix the laws that do not work and to save the lives that need not be lost.

ACUPUNCTURE FOR HEROES AND SENIORS ACT

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

Ms. JUDY CHU of California. Mr. Speaker, acupuncture is one of the oldest medical treatments in the world. Here in the U.S., the demand for acupuncture has grown significantly in recent years.

In fact, about 4 in 10 American adults use alternative medicines. When other treatments may not help, acupuncture can treat chronic pain, mental health issues, substance abuse, and many other illnesses.

I will never forget hearing the testimony of a woman who had severe back pain, but did not want invasive surgery, as suggested by her doctor, and possible addiction to morphine. Instead, she sought acupuncture, and it worked for her.

Indeed, the National Institutes of Health indicates that, for some medical issues, acupuncture can provide the needed relief. It is my goal to make this treatment available to all Americans, including seniors, our brave servicemembers, and respected veterans.

Today I am introducing a bill to do just that. This bill, the Acupuncture for Heroes and Seniors Act, will expand access to acupuncture services to these communities because they deserve to have all the tools at their disposal to live long and healthy lives.

RECOGNIZING DANNY KORNEGAY

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

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, this country is blessed with incredibly talented and God-fearing families and individuals. One great example is Danny Kornegay, a constituent and friend who was recently named the 2015 Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year.

Danny began farming 25 acres right after graduating high school and during the past 45 years has grown his operation to more than 5,500 acres, producing tobacco, sweet potatoes, cotton, soybeans, wheat, and peanuts. He also finishes about 8,000 to 10,000 head of hog per year.

My family and I have known Danny for many years. Farm families like his prove agriculture is in very capable hands, and they are the reason America continues to produce the best and safest food supply in the world.

Danny's commitment to agriculture, our community, and our State is unparalleled. I know his family and many friends are proud of him. In fact, we are all proud of him.

PASS DAPA FOR SOPHIE CRUZ AND OTHERS

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, the poster beside me depicts the moment in Pope Francis' parade through D.C. when a little girl snuck through the barrier and was lifted into the Pope's arms on live TV.

That little girl is a constituent of mine, Sophie Cruz, a 5-year-old from the City of South Gate. She is one of 5 million children who are American citizens, but whose undocumented parents face deportation. She gave the Pope a T-shirt with a message in Spanish that read: ''Pope, rescue DAPA so the legalization can be your blessing.''

Deferred Action for Parental Accountability, or DAPA, is a program that would stop the deportation of parents of American children. So far, DAPA faces strong opposition. But is this really what we want, to separate families, to leave American children in the United States without their parents?

I could not be more proud to have Sophie as my constituent. Last night my office honored her with a congressional certificate at a ceremony at the South Gate City Hall. I wish that I

could have been there last night, but I want Sophie to know that I support her and that I will be fighting for DAPA for her and for the 5 million children just like her across this great country.

WE MUST COMBAT THE HEROIN EPIDEMIC

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

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to discuss new bipartisan steps my House New Hampshire colleague, FRANK GUINTA, and I are taking to combat the heroin epidemic seizing New Hampshire and many other States across this country.

Last year in New Hampshire alone we experienced 321 drug-related deaths, according to the State medical examiner's office, and the rate of drug-related fatalities in 2015 is expected to increase.

I continue to see the impacts of this terrible epidemic as I meet with affected communities and stakeholders across my district. From educators to police officers, to advocates and health providers, it is only when we stand united and coordinate our efforts that we will be able to halt the destruction that this dangerous substance is causing all across our communities.

That is why I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me and my fellow Representative from New Hampshire in our Bipartisan Task Force to Combat the Heroin Epidemic. This task force will focus on finding solutions to the growing epidemic. We believe we must do everything possible to spread awareness, increase educational efforts, and hear from affected families and individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join us to end this epidemic in our communities.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH

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

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, October is National Farm to School Month, and I want to talk today about the recent gains our schools have made in connecting students with local food.

Across the country, the Farm to School movement has inspired over 40,000 schools to spend more of their food dollars locally, to create healthier meal options, and to teach students about growing and preparing local food. These efforts have brought numerous benefits, like new markets for local agricultural producers, better nutrition for students, and less food being thrown away in the trash.

I am proud that schools in my State of Maine have helped lead the way; but, like others, they encounter many challenges in replacing highly processed food with fresh ingredients.

The USDA Farm to School grants have eased that transition for many schools by helping them make needed changes in procurement, facilities, and training. As we celebrate Farm to School efforts this month and look toward child nutrition reauthorization, I encourage my colleagues to support increased funding for this program so more communities can reap the benefits.

HONORING MAJOR PHYLLIS PELKY

(Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Air Force Major Phyllis Pelky, who died earlier this month in a helicopter crash in Kabul, Afghanistan.

As a Major in the Air Force, Phyllis Pelky served her nation with distinction as aide-de-camp to the superintendent of the Air Force Academy. Major Pelky had been deployed in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan, working as the deputy manpower chief of the American Train, Advise and Assist Command.

As we take this moment to honor the service and patriotism of Major Pelky and recognize her sacrifice, the ultimate sacrifice as a member of our armed services, we also thank her for her contributions in the classroom.

Major Pelky was a beloved humanities teacher at the Rio Rancho High School. Her commitment to her students, combined with her enthusiasm, encouraged them to learn. She left a lasting impact on those who were fortunate to have her as a teacher. Her enduring spirit will live on through the many students she inspired.

As we mourn the passing of Phyllis Pelky and celebrate her life, my thoughts and prayers are with her husband, her two sons, her family, and the Rio Rancho community during this sad time.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

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

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. One in three women report experiencing domestic violence throughout their lifetimes. In North Carolina alone, 108 people died because of domestic violence in 2013.

Earlier today Ron Kimble, deputy city manager of Charlotte, who resides in my district, spoke at the new Members meeting about the severity of domestic violence. Mr. Kimble and his wife, Jan, lost their daughter Jamie, an only child, to domestic violence in 2012.

Jamie, a 31-year-old graduate of the University of North Carolina and rising star at Coca-Cola Consolidated, worked up the courage to leave her boyfriend, who was controlling and emotionally abusive. Just 3 months after leaving him, he took her life and then he took his own in a murder-suicide.

While Jamie can no longer share her story, her parents—Mr. and Mrs. Kimble—wanted me to share it with you today to shed light on the tragedy that often emerges from domestic violence.

I am a proud cosponsor of the Teach Safe Relationships Act because I believe including safe relationship behavior curriculum in sex education will help combat domestic violence. This Domestic Violence Awareness Month, I urge this Congress to pass the Teach Safe Relationships Act and support other critical domestic violence legislation.

FIGHTING BACK AGAINST BREAST CANCER

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

Ms. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month and all the men and women working to raise awareness in north Florida.

About one in eight U.S. women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer over the course of her lifetime. Approximately 43,000 will be diagnosed in Florida in this year alone. But in north Florida, we are fighting back.

Local charities, media outlets, survivors, and strong women currently fighting the disease are standing up to be heard and reminding everyone to ''Think Pink.''

Each year we make greater strides against breast cancer. Together we are going to beat it and save lives.

□ 1230

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, last evening, I voted against reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank, a Federal entity that financially backs purchases of American goods and services by providing taxpayer-backed loans and loan guarantees to foreign companies and governments.

While the Ex-Im Bank can help American industry break into foreign markets, too often it underwrites purchases by companies that directly compete with domestic companies, placing them at a significant disadvantage. For example, when foreign airlines purchase aircraft at lower costs with Ex-Im Bank backing, they are able to charge lower fares and outcompete our domestic airlines.

The Federal Government should ensure that competition occurs on a level

playing field, without tilting it toward one side or another.

Furthermore, Ex-Im Bank supporters used a discharge petition to bring this bill to the floor, a parliamentary tactic which limits the use of amendments and creates an end run around the normal committee process that should apply to every measure considered by Congress.

It is the American public that shoulders the risk of these loans, and, at the very minimum, they deserve an honest debate on this floor on the best way to move forward in promoting our exports abroad.

BIPARTISAN BUDGET AGREEMENT

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bipartisan budget agreement that will come before us here in the House soon. It restores critical funding for our Nation's defense and domestic priorities in a balanced fashion, sparing us from the mindless meat-ax cuts of sequestration.

Under previous Republican budget proposals, spending on domestic programs would have fallen to its lowest level in 50 years. It is the threat of uncertainty, of those indiscriminate cuts, that has held back our economy.

This agreement also pulls us back from the brink of defaulting on our Nation's credit. Although I am astounded at how some of our colleagues continue to advocate for such a catastrophe, it would send a shock wave through the global economy. We avert that in this agreement.

Mr. Speaker, governing is about the art of compromise. Today's agreement, not perfect, represents that principle. I hope your successor and, frankly, more of the Members on your side of the aisle, will embrace that spirit moving forward in this Congress so, once again, we can start delivering for the American people.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1314, ENSURING TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL ACT

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 495 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 495

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 1314) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations, with the Senate amendment thereto, and to consider in the House, without intervention of any point of order, a motion offered by the Majority Leader or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendment with the amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution modified by the amendment printed in part B of that report. The Senate amendment and the motion shall be considered as read. The motion shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader or their respective designees. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER), my good friend, 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

Mr. COLE. Mr. 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 gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Rules Committee met and reported a rule for consideration of H.R. 1314, the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015. The rule makes in order a motion offered by the majority leader that the House concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314, with an amendment consisting of the text of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the majority leader and the minority leader.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start with a phrase I often share with my fellow Members: In a negotiation, you are always going to get less than you want and give up more than you would like. I think that is a fitting way to describe the bill we find ourselves presented with today. In an era of divided government, that is the reality we find ourselves in.

At the beginning of the negotiation, the President demanded a clean debt ceiling increase with no changes and no conditions. In addition, he wanted more spending and higher taxes. Given that, I think the deal that we have before us is a testament to our leadership's ability to negotiate.

As I said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, nobody is going to be popping champagne corks at either end of Pennsylvania Avenue over this bill. It is what most things are in divided government, in a system of checks and balances, and in an era of polarized politics. It is a deal that leaves both sides unsatisfied, but it is a deal that avoids default, prevents a government shutdown, and adequately funds our military. Moreover, it reforms and funds the Social Security Disability Insurance Fund, saving it from bankruptcy, and prevents a crippling increase in the premiums paid by many people who receive Medicare part B.

There are any number of provisions that Members on both sides can point to as reasons to oppose this legislation. I, myself, would have negotiated a different deal. But in determining one's support for this legislation, I encourage Members to look at what the alternative would be, and that is this: the first default on our Nation's debt in the history of this country, significant cuts to our military in a time when we need our military the most, and an almost 50 percent increase in Medicare premiums for many of our seniors. That is the reality of what happens if we do nothing.

Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by a number of provisions in this legislation. First, just like the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, this legislation sets forth 2 years of budget certainty for the Appropriations Committee. That certainty puts us on a path to ensure consideration of full-year spending bills for the next 2 years, just as we were able to accomplish this past fiscal year.

In addition, this budget certainty provides the needed investment for our military. With the ongoing conflicts across the Middle East, Russian activity in Eastern Europe, and Chinese claims in the South China Sea, it is clearer now than ever that America needs a robust military.

Mr. Speaker, most importantly, all these discretionary spending increases are fully paid for by offsets in mandatory programs.

In addition to these critical investments, the legislation before us makes a number of commonsense, structural reforms to SSDI, like requiring a medical review before awarding benefits, and expanding Cooperative Disability Investigations units to investigate sophisticated fraud schemes before benefits are awarded. These reforms both ensure that the disability trust fund will be able to pay full benefits and ensure that those who truly are disabled have access to this important program.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, this legislation realizes over $30 billion in Medicare savings within the budget window and countless billions in years to come.

I am pleased to again be talking about the real drivers of our debt: the two-thirds of our government spending that is on autopilot. If we are unable to deal with these mandatory programs, they will end up bankrupting us.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this legislation suspends the debt ceiling through March 15, 2017. Since its inception in 1917, 20 debt limit laws also included a change in fiscal policy. I am pleased that this debt limit increase is yet again accompanied by mandatory reforms.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I would have preferred stronger reforms, but, in this era of divided government with a

Democratic President and a Republican Congress, no one will be able to get everything they want.

The President wanted a clean debt limit increase. Congress wanted significant entitlement reforms. What we are left with is a compromise which lowers the trajectory of our debt, but also assures the world that the United States will pay its bills.

While not a perfect piece of legislation, I believe this moves us in the right direction and funds critical priorities for our Nation. I urge support for the rule and the underlying legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am here to do my part of the rule. I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma, my friend, for yielding me the time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement before us. Instead of the brinksmanship and short-term stopgaps that we have seen, we have, I am glad to say, a 2-year budget agreement that eases the burden of the damaging sequester cuts, protects seniors, affirms the full faith and credit of the United States, and provides much-needed economic stability and security to our Nation.

This agreement provides relief from 90 percent of the sequester's cuts for the next 2 years. While we should eliminate the sequester in its entirety, this is a welcome respite from the sequester's grip, ensuring a renewed investment in research, infrastructure, and early childhood education.

The agreement also includes a clean way to pay the debts that Congress has already incurred and will eliminate the threat of a debt limit standoff for the next 2 years.

We should remember that the last time politics were played over the debt limit, our credit rating was downgraded for the first time in our history and our economy suffered.

Because of this agreement, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the certainty that this budget agreement creates will encourage the growth of 340,000 new jobs in 2016 alone.

The Los Angeles Times Editorial Board wrote this morning that the budget agreement will provide ''a welcome measure of stability at a time of increasing anxiety about the global economy.''

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the text of the editorial from the Los Angeles Times entitled ''JOHN BOEHNER's Last Deal Leaves Congress Better Off.''

[From the Los Angeles Times, Oct. 28, 2015]

JOHN BOEHNER'S LAST DEAL LEAVES CONGRESS BETTER OFF

In a parting gift to the conservatives who hectored him out of office, House Speaker John A. Boehner (R–Ohio) negotiated a budget agreement with Senate leaders and the Obama administration that increases federal spending and raises the debt ceiling in exchange for—well, not much that Republicans covet. There are no big changes in entitlements, no defunding of Planned Parenthood. Yet this backroom deal delivers the goods that matter most: It will avert the risk of a shutdown until after the next president takes office, providing a welcome measure of stability at a time of increasing anxiety about the global economy.

Boehner had said he wanted to ''clean the barn'' for his replacement—most likely Rep. Paul D. Ryan (R–Wis.)—which meant disposing of four divisive issues with rapidly approaching deadlines. The federal government is days away from hitting its borrowing limit. Federal agencies are slated to run out of funding in early December. The Social Security trust fund for disability benefits is expected to be empty by late 2016. And millions of elderly and disabled Americans face a whopping 52% increase in their Medicare Part B premiums at year's end.

The compromise negotiated by congressional leaders and the White House would resolve all of these issues in the time-honored way: giving everyone much of what they want, then paying for it with budget gimmicks. The debt ceiling would be suspended until March 2017, the budget caps lifted for two fiscal years, disability benefits assured through 2022 and Medicare premium increases made less dramatic. Without these steps, Congress risks defaulting on debts, forcing a government shutdown and delivering a painful financial blow to vulnerable Americans. None of those outcomes should even be contemplatable, and yet Congress' record of dysfunction over the last four years makes them all real possibilities absent a deal like the one Boehner negotiated.

Obviously, it would be better for Congress to make real choices about spending instead of relying on accounting legerdemain to make the numbers look good. The proposed fix for disability insurance, for example, would take the money out of a fund for future retirement benefits; that's a reprieve, not a solution. But when Congress ignores a problem until the last minute, it takes real solutions off the table, leaving lawmakers to choose between pragmatism and the sort of posturing that dissident House Republicans have made their stock in trade. Credit Boehner with opting for one last deal rather than showing the country again that the House GOP's reach exceeds its grasp.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, this agreement avoids the harmful cuts to Medicare and Social Security beneficiaries by reforming tax compliance among hedge funds and private equity funds, ensuring that people in the top bracket pay their fair share.

The agreement also limits any increase in the Medicare part B premiums for 2016, protecting millions of seniors from a roughly 50 percent rate hike. It does this by spreading out the cost of replenishing the Medicare trust fund over a number of years, and it prevents this kind of rate hike from happening again in 2017.

The health savings included in this agreement focus on well-documented areas of overpayment and improved program integrity, clearing out waste in the system.

What's more, the agreement avoids the deep cuts to Social Security Disability Insurance benefits that would occur at the end of next year, ensuring it continues to pay benefits without reducing benefit levels or imposing new eligibility restrictions. Social Security Disability will survive, but with reforms to ensure accountability and fiscal prudence that are long overdue.

These are good steps forward. The agreement represents significant progress for hardworking American families, and for the next 2 years, we have come out of the sequester's shadow. Together, we have found a way forward to confront the challenges we face as a nation.

This agreement is the first bipartisan budget bill we have seen in quite awhile. It serves as a roadmap that will lead us through the appropriations process; but until we finish that process, we are still on the path toward a government shutdown.

However, with the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank yesterday and now the introduction of this budget agreement, I am hopeful that this House can make progress on issues that are important to America and to our economy. We have sort of grown accustomed to governing by crisis with stopgap measures that do harm to the Nation.

When JOHN BOEHNER assumed the Speakership, he promised an open process for all Members; but what we have seen is that one party has been consistently shut out and only allowed to participate in fits and starts, which silences half the voices of our Nation. We have seen politicized select committees and political maneuvers, and we hope that the cries to the Speaker-in-waiting for open legislative process will include both parties and include all voices.

This agreement, with a 2-year outlook, with input from leadership from both Chambers of Congress and the White House, has, perhaps, marked a turning point. Only time will tell.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1245

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just want to make a couple of points. First, I want to thank my good friend for her work on this and her cooperation. I agree with many of the points she made, certainly about the fact that I hope this heralds a new beginning.

Worth noting, we did have a budget agreement 2 years ago, and that worked pretty well for a couple of years. I am pleased to see that this follow-on agreement is here before us today. I think it will give us 2 years of stability.

My friend will understand if I take mild exception with some of her remarks about being shut out of the process. Those of us who were here in the minority on the Republican side of the aisle certainly remember not being allowed to offer amendments to the Affordable Care Act, seeing the stimulus act come to the floor with no committee, and, frankly, having the longtime practice of appropriations bills coming under open rules totally suspended.

But, in the spirit of cooperation today, I will leave it at that. Let's look

ahead. I think my friend is exactly right when she suggests this bill not only solves some important issues that are in front of us in a bipartisan way, a give-and-take way, but creates an opening and an opportunity going forward.

I really think, if we get this rule passed—and I am sure we will—and we get the underlying legislation passed—I am sure we will be able to do that as well—that next year offers us an opportunity to do what we have not done around here, really, since 2006, and that is see every single appropriations bill come to the floor under an open rule so that Members on both sides can participate in the most important process of governing ourselves, and that is the appropriation of the taxpayers' dollars for the functioning of government.

If we can build on this and achieve that, I think a lot of people on both sides of the aisle who are concerned about regular order and who, frankly, have never seen it work will have an opportunity to watch it work.

I would suggest the fact that we already have an agreement as to what the top-line number will be on what we spend in the normal appropriations process might make it easier for a lot of the votes to be more bipartisan.

Frankly, I know that is certainly possible in my committee, the Appropriations Committee, and I think that is something that Members are genuinely looking for: an opportunity to debate priorities and discuss, but also to come together when there is common ground.

Again, I want to look at this bill. I know there will be some controversy about it today and there will be some people who would have liked to have done some things differently. Frankly, I suspect every Member would like to do things differently.

But the reality is we are in a period of divided government. We do operate in a system of checks and balances. It has been an exceptionally polarizing political environment. The fact that, with all of those challenges, the Speaker, the majority leader, the President, and the respective minority leaders of both Chambers could come together and find enough common ground to accomplish the things that this accomplishes is something that we ought to laud, not to disparage.

I look forward to working with my friend. I look forward to this becoming the foundation for a much more productive 2016, where we can do something we have not done for a long time, and that is operate under regular order throughout the entire appropriations process. That is going to be my New Year's resolution after we get an omnibus done.

I think this will set the ground for getting that done by early December and we can have stability next year and an opportunity to legislate the way I think most Members, regardless of party or philosophical point of view, want to legislate.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY).

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend and the ranking member on the Rules Committee for yielding to me and for her extraordinary leadership for the State of New York and for so many issues before this body.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for this 2-year budget bill and the exemplary bipartisan cooperation that made it possible. Although this bill is by no means perfect, it is a good bill. It is good for the economy and good for the country.

It will ensure our Nation maintains the full faith and credit of global financial markets. It protects millions of Americans from an enormous Medicare premium increase. It frees us from the uncertainty that roils markets and worries businesses, both big and small.

While I support the compromise, I would like to raise some concerns about its impact on hospitals in the district that I represent.

The bill puts restrictions on which hospital-affiliated facilities can be considered outpatient departments and reimbursed at hospital rates.

Under the bill going forward, acquired facilities that are a certain distance from the main campus of hospitals will be reimbursed, but at a lower rate. They will be reimbursed for services as a regular doctor's visit. Existing sites will be grandfathered, but those that are under construction will be exempted and charged the lower rate.

This will be a challenge in areas, like the district that I represent, where increasing demand collides with the lack of physical space to cause scattered hospital-affiliated facilities. I hope to work with my colleagues to improve the changes made to these outpatient services Medicare payments.

I commend all who have worked with such goodwill on this budget. I urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to say I think my good friend from New York makes an excellent point. There are going to be some issues like this that I think we need to look at very carefully in the coming weeks and perhaps find some common ground on. In an agreement of this magnitude, occasionally we are going to have some problems.

I have some other areas of concern in some of the offsets, agricultural crop insurance being one of them. I suspect, in the coming weeks, perhaps we can find some common ground on these issues. I certainly hope so.

Of course, if we get an omnibus spending bill done, which this is the foundation or the predecessor for, then we will have a vehicle where perhaps we can address some of the concerns that my friend raises and as I know others have in different areas with respect to this agreement.

Again, I want to thank my friend for bringing the issues forward. I think they are important to air and make note of. I just pledge that I will do what I can to see if we can find some common ground here and iron out some of these knotty problems that we have.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. COLE. I certainly yield to my friend.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I would like to underscore my appreciation to you and the ranking member for your willingness to work on correcting this.

I believe a correction could literally save taxpayer dollars and be more efficient. The willingness to work together for better government for our country is, I think, a good step forward.

I thank the leaders on the other side of the aisle for approaching this in a bipartisan, cooperative spirit, as you are showing on the floor today. It is better for our country and certainly better for the budget in all respects.

Thank you very, very much. I am extremely appreciative.

Mr. COLE. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend again. I again express my appreciation for the point that she raises and the willingness to work together.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time. My scheduled speakers have not arrived, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, today we have before us a 2-year budget agreement that protects seniors, invests in job training, and eases the burden of the sequester.

However, unless we see the process through with the appropriations process, we are still on a path toward shutdown, which is not what the American people want from Congress and what the economy can't stand.

So I urge my colleagues to vote for this bipartisan agreement, for the rule, and the underlying bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just reiterate a number of points that I opened my remarks with.

First, I don't think this is a perfect bill. I doubt that anybody on this floor does. However, it is the only deal that can be considered in the timeframe we have before the debt limit is breached.

Secondly, the deal ensures an appropriate level of discretionary government spending for the next 2 years, a level that robustly funds our military and ensures America's security.

Finally, this deal is fully paid for and includes mandatory offsets that will build over time, further decreasing the trajectory of our expanding debt, shifting the burden to where the true drivers of the debt are and where the supercommittee was intended to actually

find cuts and brings us back to fiscal balance.

Before I conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I also want to add a personal tribute, if I may, to our Speaker. This is probably the last significant piece of legislation that this body will pass under Speaker BOEHNER's leadership. He was instrumental in forging it.

I know there are many people who are critical of particular aspects of this deal or about the process. Indeed, our Speaker himself has used rather colorful language in expressing his opinion of the process by which we arrived at this agreement.

However, I think it is worth noting that, in the finest traditions of this House and the institutions that we all cherish, the Speaker, the President, the majority leader, the minority leader in the House, the minority leader in the Senate, came together, put aside differences, and found common ground.

In doing so, they solved some really difficult issues for us. They dealt with an impending default to make sure that didn't happen. They dealt with a potential government shutdown or at least bought us the time to deal with it between now and December 11.

They made sure that the additional discretionary spending that they both agreed to was offset by a variety of means. They included a really important reform in the Social Security disability system that, again, will keep it from going bankrupt and help millions of Americans who need help.

Finally, they also made sure that millions of Americans who are facing literally 50 percent rate increases under Medicare part B will not have those increases. That is no small achievement.

And JOHN BOEHNER, for 25 years in this institution, from a freshman to the highest pinnacle that we have, the Speakership, has operated with integrity and has operated from principle, but has never been afraid to try and find common ground for people with different points of view. I, for one, appreciate the manner in which he has led our House, the manner in which at the very last minute he continues to work for the good of the American people and to reach across the aisle to find common ground with those with opposing views and opposing partisan affiliations.

I appreciate the manner in which he has dealt with our own Conference, which is the largest since 1928, and, consequently, probably the most fractious. He has worked with Members of differing opinion and found common ground and brought us together.

So I just, again, speaking for myself, want to say how much I have enjoyed, throughout my entire career, having had the opportunity to serve with Speaker BOEHNER, first as a freshman member on his committee when he chaired Education and the Workforce, then at the leadership table when he became the leader of our party, and, finally, just as another Member who admires and appreciates his many, many accomplishments, his character, and the manner in which he has led.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank the Speaker of the entire House, Mr. BOEHNER, for his distinguished service to this institution and to this country and for being a valued friend and a person that I genuinely admire and I think people on both sides of the aisle genuinely admire.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1453

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN) at 2 o'clock and 53 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 495; and

Adoption of House Resolution 495, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1314, ENSURING TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 495) providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1314) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 325, nays 103, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 577]

YEAS—325

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Beatty
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carney
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cicilline
Clawson (FL)
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Kuster
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lawrence
Levin
Lieu, Ted
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell

Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanford
Scalise
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Torres
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—103

Bass
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Blumenauer
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capps
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Conyers
Cummings
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Farr
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gallego
Garamendi
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Hinojosa
Honda
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kildee
Kilmer
Kirkpatrick
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowey
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meng
Moore
Nadler
Napolitano
Norcross
Pallone
Pelosi
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Roybal-Allard
Ryan (OH)
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Scott (VA)
Sherman
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Waters, Maxine

NOT VOTING—6

Diaz-Balart
Hudson
Meeks
Payne
Takai
Visclosky

□ 1524

Mrs. DINGELL and Mr. LOEBSACK changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. ROSKAM, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Messrs. LYNCH, NOLAN, Ms. ESTY, Messrs. FATTAH, LOWENTHAL, Ms. HAHN, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mses. WILSON of Florida, WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, ADAMS, SEWELL of Alabama, and Mrs. BLACK changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 392, noes 37, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 578]

AYES—392

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—37

Amash
Blum
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Buck
Clawson (FL)
DesJarlais
Doggett
Fleming
Fudge
Gohmert
Gosar
Griffith
Harris
Hastings
Hice, Jody B.
Huelskamp
Jones
Jordan
King (IA)
Labrador
Lee
Massie
McDermott
Mooney (WV)
Mulvaney
Perry
Peters
Ribble
Salmon
Sanford
Stutzman
Titus
Waters, Maxine
Weber (TX)
Yoho

NOT VOTING—5

Hudson
Meeks
Payne
Takai
Visclosky

□ 1533

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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY COMMITTEE ON RULES REGARDING AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR THE DRIVE ACT

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday evening, the Rules Committee circulated a Dear Colleague outlining the amendment process for the Senate amendments to H.R. 22, the DRIVE

Act. This will be the vehicle for consideration of H.R. 3763, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act. An amendment deadline has been set for Friday, October 30, at 2 p.m.

This is an unusual amendment process; so, I ask all Members to please read the Dear Colleague, which can be found on the Rules Committee Web site, very carefully and refer any questions to the Rules Committee staff or myself, as the chairman.

I would also like to point out that, in consultation with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, several changes were made to the bill, as ordered reported. A summary of those changes can also be found on the Rules Committee Web site. Please feel free to contact me or any of our staff members if we can be of assistance.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

ENSURING TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL ACT

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 495 and as the designee of the majority leader, I call up the bill (H.R. 1314) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations, with the Senate amendment thereto, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN). The Clerk will designate the Senate amendment.

Senate amendment:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Trade Act of 2015''.

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

TITLE I—TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''.

SEC. 102. TRADE NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES.

(a) OVERALL TRADE NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES.—The overall trade negotiating objectives of the United States for agreements subject to the provisions of section 103 are—

(1) to obtain more open, equitable, and reciprocal market access;

(2) to obtain the reduction or elimination of barriers and distortions that are directly related to trade and investment and that decrease market opportunities for United States exports or otherwise distort United States trade;

(3) to further strengthen the system of international trade and investment disciplines and procedures, including dispute settlement;

(4) to foster economic growth, raise living standards, enhance the competitiveness of the United States, promote full employment in the United States, and enhance the global economy;

(5) to ensure that trade and environmental policies are mutually supportive and to seek to protect and preserve the environment and enhance the international means of doing so, while optimizing the use of the world's resources;

(6) to promote respect for worker rights and the rights of children consistent with core labor standards of the ILO (as set out in section 111(7)) and an understanding of the relationship between trade and worker rights;

(7) to seek provisions in trade agreements under which parties to those agreements ensure that they do not weaken or reduce the protections afforded in domestic environmental and labor laws as an encouragement for trade;

(8) to ensure that trade agreements afford small businesses equal access to international markets, equitable trade benefits, and expanded export market opportunities, and provide for the reduction or elimination of trade and investment barriers that disproportionately impact small businesses;

(9) to promote universal ratification and full compliance with ILO Convention No. 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor;

(10) to ensure that trade agreements reflect and facilitate the increasingly interrelated, multi-sectoral nature of trade and investment activity;

(11) to recognize the growing significance of the Internet as a trading platform in international commerce;

(12) to take into account other legitimate United States domestic objectives, including, but not limited to, the protection of legitimate health or safety, essential security, and consumer interests and the law and regulations related thereto; and

(13) to take into account conditions relating to religious freedom of any party to negotiations for a trade agreement with the United States.

(b) PRINCIPAL TRADE NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES.—

(1) TRADE IN GOODS.—The principal negotiating objectives of the United States regarding trade in goods are—

(A) to expand competitive market opportunities for exports of goods from the United States and to obtain fairer and more open conditions of trade, including through the utilization of global value chains, by reducing or eliminating tariff and nontariff barriers and policies and practices of foreign governments directly related to trade that decrease market opportunities for United States exports or otherwise distort United States trade; and

(B) to obtain reciprocal tariff and nontariff barrier elimination agreements, including with respect to those tariff categories covered in section 111(b) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3521(b)).

(2) TRADE IN SERVICES.—(A) The principal negotiating objective of the United States regarding trade in services is to expand competitive market opportunities for United States services and to obtain fairer and more open conditions of trade, including through utilization of global value chains, by reducing or eliminating barriers to international trade in services, such as regulatory and other barriers that deny national treatment and market access or unreasonably restrict the establishment or operations of service suppliers.

(B) Recognizing that expansion of trade in services generates benefits for all sectors of the economy and facilitates trade, the objective described in subparagraph (A) should be pursued through all means, including through a plurilateral agreement with those countries willing and able to undertake high standard services commitments for both existing and new services.

(3) TRADE IN AGRICULTURE.—The principal negotiating objective of the United States with respect to agriculture is to obtain competitive opportunities for United States exports of agricultural commodities in foreign markets substantially equivalent to the competitive opportunities afforded foreign exports in United States markets and to achieve fairer and more open conditions of trade in bulk, specialty crop, and value added commodities by—

(A) securing more open and equitable market access through robust rules on sanitary and phytosanitary measures that—

(i) encourage the adoption of international standards and require a science-based justification be provided for a sanitary or phytosanitary measure if the measure is more restrictive than the applicable international standard;

(ii) improve regulatory coherence, promote the use of systems-based approaches, and appropriately recognize the equivalence of health and safety protection systems of exporting countries;

(iii) require that measures are transparently developed and implemented, are based on risk assessments that take into account relevant international guidelines and scientific data, and are not more restrictive on trade than necessary to meet the intended purpose; and

(iv) improve import check processes, including testing methodologies and procedures, and certification requirements,

while recognizing that countries may put in place measures to protect human, animal, or plant life or health in a manner consistent with their international obligations, including the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (referred to in section 101(d)(3) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(3)));

(B) reducing or eliminating, by a date certain, tariffs or other charges that decrease market opportunities for United States exports—

(i) giving priority to those products that are subject to significantly higher tariffs or subsidy regimes of major producing countries; and

(ii) providing reasonable adjustment periods for United States import sensitive products, in close consultation with Congress on such products before initiating tariff reduction negotiations;

(C) reducing tariffs to levels that are the same as or lower than those in the United States;

(D) reducing or eliminating subsidies that decrease market opportunities for United States exports or unfairly distort agriculture markets to the detriment of the United States;

(E) allowing the preservation of programs that support family farms and rural communities but do not distort trade;

(F) developing disciplines for domestic support programs, so that production that is in excess of domestic food security needs is sold at world prices;

(G) eliminating government policies that create price depressing surpluses;

(H) eliminating state trading enterprises whenever possible;

(I) developing, strengthening, and clarifying rules to eliminate practices that unfairly decrease United States market access opportunities or distort agricultural markets to the detriment of the United States, and ensuring that such rules are subject to efficient, timely, and effective dispute settlement, including—

(i) unfair or trade distorting activities of state trading enterprises and other administrative mechanisms, with emphasis on requiring price transparency in the operation of state trading enterprises and such other mechanisms in order to end cross subsidization, price discrimination, and price undercutting;

(ii) unjustified trade restrictions or commercial requirements, such as labeling, that affect new technologies, including biotechnology;

(iii) unjustified sanitary or phytosanitary restrictions, including restrictions not based on scientific principles in contravention of obligations in the Uruguay Round Agreements or bilateral or regional trade agreements;

(iv) other unjustified technical barriers to trade; and

(v) restrictive rules in the administration of tariff rate quotas;

(J) eliminating practices that adversely affect trade in perishable or cyclical products, while improving import relief mechanisms to recognize the unique characteristics of perishable and cyclical agriculture;

(K) ensuring that import relief mechanisms for perishable and cyclical agriculture are as accessible and timely to growers in the United States as those mechanisms that are used by other countries;

(L) taking into account whether a party to the negotiations has failed to adhere to the provisions of already existing trade agreements with the United States or has circumvented obligations under those agreements;

(M) taking into account whether a product is subject to market distortions by reason of a failure of a major producing country to adhere to the provisions of already existing trade agreements with the United States or by the circumvention by that country of its obligations under those agreements;

(N) otherwise ensuring that countries that accede to the World Trade Organization have made meaningful market liberalization commitments in agriculture;

(O) taking into account the impact that agreements covering agriculture to which the United States is a party have on the United States agricultural industry;

(P) maintaining bona fide food assistance programs, market development programs, and export credit programs;

(Q) seeking to secure the broadest market access possible in multilateral, regional, and bilateral negotiations, recognizing the effect that simultaneous sets of negotiations may have on United States import sensitive commodities (including those subject to tariff rate quotas);

(R) seeking to develop an international consensus on the treatment of seasonal or perishable agricultural products in investigations relating to dumping and safeguards and in any other relevant area;

(S) seeking to establish the common base year for calculating the Aggregated Measurement of Support (as defined in the Agreement on Agriculture) as the end of each country's Uruguay Round implementation period, as reported in each country's Uruguay Round market access schedule;

(T) ensuring transparency in the administration of tariff rate quotas through multilateral, plurilateral, and bilateral negotiations; and

(U) eliminating and preventing the undermining of market access for United States products through improper use of a country's system for protecting or recognizing geographical indications, including failing to ensure transparency and procedural fairness and protecting generic terms.

(4) FOREIGN INVESTMENT.—Recognizing that United States law on the whole provides a high level of protection for investment, consistent with or greater than the level required by international law, the principal negotiating objectives of the United States regarding foreign investment are to reduce or eliminate artificial or trade distorting barriers to foreign investment, while ensuring that foreign investors in the United States are not accorded greater substantive rights with respect to investment protections than United States investors in the United States, and to secure for investors important rights comparable to those that would be available under United States legal principles and practice, by—

(A) reducing or eliminating exceptions to the principle of national treatment;

(B) freeing the transfer of funds relating to investments;

(C) reducing or eliminating performance requirements, forced technology transfers, and other unreasonable barriers to the establishment and operation of investments;

(D) seeking to establish standards for expropriation and compensation for expropriation, consistent with United States legal principles and practice;

(E) seeking to establish standards for fair and equitable treatment, consistent with United States legal principles and practice, including the principle of due process;

(F) providing meaningful procedures for resolving investment disputes;

(G) seeking to improve mechanisms used to resolve disputes between an investor and a government through—

(i) mechanisms to eliminate frivolous claims and to deter the filing of frivolous claims;

(ii) procedures to ensure the efficient selection of arbitrators and the expeditious disposition of claims;

(iii) procedures to enhance opportunities for public input into the formulation of government positions; and

(iv) providing for an appellate body or similar mechanism to provide coherence to the interpretations of investment provisions in trade agreements; and

(H) ensuring the fullest measure of transparency in the dispute settlement mechanism, to the extent consistent with the need to protect information that is classified or business confidential, by—

(i) ensuring that all requests for dispute settlement are promptly made public;

(ii) ensuring that—

(I) all proceedings, submissions, findings, and decisions are promptly made public; and

(II) all hearings are open to the public; and

(iii) establishing a mechanism for acceptance of amicus curiae submissions from businesses, unions, and nongovernmental organizations.

(5) INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY.—The principal negotiating objectives of the United States regarding trade-related intellectual property are—

(A) to further promote adequate and effective protection of intellectual property rights, including through—

(i)(I) ensuring accelerated and full implementation of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights referred to in section 101(d)(15) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(15)), particularly with respect to meeting enforcement obligations under that agreement; and

(II) ensuring that the provisions of any trade agreement governing intellectual property rights that is entered into by the United States reflect a standard of protection similar to that found in United States law;

(ii) providing strong protection for new and emerging technologies and new methods of transmitting and distributing products embodying intellectual property, including in a manner that facilitates legitimate digital trade;

(iii) preventing or eliminating discrimination with respect to matters affecting the availability, acquisition, scope, maintenance, use, and enforcement of intellectual property rights;

(iv) ensuring that standards of protection and enforcement keep pace with technological developments, and in particular ensuring that rightholders have the legal and technological means to control the use of their works through the Internet and other global communication media, and to prevent the unauthorized use of their works;

(v) providing strong enforcement of intellectual property rights, including through accessible, expeditious, and effective civil, administrative, and criminal enforcement mechanisms; and

(vi) preventing or eliminating government involvement in the violation of intellectual property rights, including cyber theft and piracy;

(B) to secure fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory market access opportunities for United States persons that rely upon intellectual property protection; and

(C) to respect the Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, adopted by the World Trade Organization at the Fourth Ministerial Conference at Doha, Qatar on November 14, 2001, and to ensure that trade agreements foster innovation and promote access to medicines.

(6) DIGITAL TRADE IN GOODS AND SERVICES AND CROSS-BORDER DATA FLOWS.—The principal negotiating objectives of the United States with respect to digital trade in goods and services, as well as cross-border data flows, are—

(A) to ensure that current obligations, rules, disciplines, and commitments under the World Trade Organization and bilateral and regional trade agreements apply to digital trade in goods and services and to cross-border data flows;

(B) to ensure that—

(i) electronically delivered goods and services receive no less favorable treatment under trade rules and commitments than like products delivered in physical form; and

(ii) the classification of such goods and services ensures the most liberal trade treatment possible, fully encompassing both existing and new trade;

(C) to ensure that governments refrain from implementing trade-related measures that impede digital trade in goods and services, restrict cross-border data flows, or require local storage or processing of data;

(D) with respect to subparagraphs (A) through (C), where legitimate policy objectives require domestic regulations that affect digital trade in goods and services or cross-border data flows, to obtain commitments that any such regulations are the least restrictive on trade, nondiscriminatory, and transparent, and promote an open market environment; and

(E) to extend the moratorium of the World Trade Organization on duties on electronic transmissions.

(7) REGULATORY PRACTICES.—The principal negotiating objectives of the United States regarding the use of government regulation or other practices to reduce market access for United States goods, services, and investments are—

(A) to achieve increased transparency and opportunity for the participation of affected parties in the development of regulations;

(B) to require that proposed regulations be based on sound science, cost benefit analysis, risk assessment, or other objective evidence;

(C) to establish consultative mechanisms and seek other commitments, as appropriate, to improve regulatory practices and promote increased regulatory coherence, including through—

(i) transparency in developing guidelines, rules, regulations, and laws for government procurement and other regulatory regimes;

(ii) the elimination of redundancies in testing and certification;

(iii) early consultations on significant regulations;

(iv) the use of impact assessments;

(v) the periodic review of existing regulatory measures; and

(vi) the application of good regulatory practices;

(D) to seek greater openness, transparency, and convergence of standards development processes, and enhance cooperation on standards issues globally;

(E) to promote regulatory compatibility through harmonization, equivalence, or mutual recognition of different regulations and standards and to encourage the use of international and interoperable standards, as appropriate;

(F) to achieve the elimination of government measures such as price controls and reference pricing which deny full market access for United States products;

(G) to ensure that government regulatory reimbursement regimes are transparent, provide procedural fairness, are nondiscriminatory, and provide full market access for United States products; and

(H) to ensure that foreign governments—

(i) demonstrate that the collection of undisclosed proprietary information is limited to that necessary to satisfy a legitimate and justifiable regulatory interest; and

(ii) protect such information against disclosure, except in exceptional circumstances to protect the public, or where such information is effectively protected against unfair competition.

(8) STATE-OWNED AND STATE-CONTROLLED ENTERPRISES.—The principal negotiating objective of the United States regarding competition by state-owned and state-controlled enterprises is to seek commitments that—

(A) eliminate or prevent trade distortions and unfair competition favoring state-owned and state-controlled enterprises to the extent of their engagement in commercial activity, and

(B) ensure that such engagement is based solely on commercial considerations,

in particular through disciplines that eliminate or prevent discrimination and market-distorting subsidies and that promote transparency.

(9) LOCALIZATION BARRIERS TO TRADE.—The principal negotiating objective of the United States with respect to localization barriers is to eliminate and prevent measures that require United States producers and service providers to locate facilities, intellectual property, or other assets in a country as a market access or investment condition, including indigenous innovation measures.

(10) LABOR AND THE ENVIRONMENT.—The principal negotiating objectives of the United States with respect to labor and the environment are—

(A) to ensure that a party to a trade agreement with the United States—

(i) adopts and maintains measures implementing internationally recognized core labor standards (as defined in section 111(17)) and its obligations under common multilateral environmental agreements (as defined in section 111(6)),

(ii) does not waive or otherwise derogate from, or offer to waive or otherwise derogate from—

(I) its statutes or regulations implementing internationally recognized core labor standards (as defined in section 111(17)), in a manner affecting trade or investment between the United States and that party, where the waiver or derogation would be inconsistent with one or more such standards, or

(II) its environmental laws in a manner that weakens or reduces the protections afforded in those laws and in a manner affecting trade or investment between the United States and that party, except as provided in its law and provided not inconsistent with its obligations under common multilateral environmental agreements (as defined in section 111(6)) or other provisions of the trade agreement specifically agreed upon, and

(iii) does not fail to effectively enforce its environmental or labor laws, through a sustained or recurring course of action or inaction,

in a manner affecting trade or investment between the United States and that party after entry into force of a trade agreement between those countries;

(B) to recognize that—

(i) with respect to environment, parties to a trade agreement retain the right to exercise prosecutorial discretion and to make decisions regarding the allocation of enforcement resources with respect to other environmental laws determined to have higher priorities, and a party is effectively enforcing its laws if a course of action or inaction reflects a reasonable, bona fide exercise of such discretion, or results from a reasonable, bona fide decision regarding the allocation of resources; and

(ii) with respect to labor, decisions regarding the distribution of enforcement resources are not a reason for not complying with a party's labor obligations; a party to a trade agreement retains the right to reasonable exercise of discretion and to make bona fide decisions regarding the allocation of resources between labor enforcement activities among core labor standards, provided the exercise of such discretion and such decisions are not inconsistent with its obligations;

(C) to strengthen the capacity of United States trading partners to promote respect for core labor standards (as defined in section 111(7));

(D) to strengthen the capacity of United States trading partners to protect the environment through the promotion of sustainable development;

(E) to reduce or eliminate government practices or policies that unduly threaten sustainable development;

(F) to seek market access, through the elimination of tariffs and nontariff barriers, for United States environmental technologies, goods, and services;

(G) to ensure that labor, environmental, health, or safety policies and practices of the parties to trade agreements with the United States do not arbitrarily or unjustifiably discriminate against United States exports or serve as disguised barriers to trade;

(H) to ensure that enforceable labor and environment obligations are subject to the same dispute settlement and remedies as other enforceable obligations under the agreement; and

(I) to ensure that a trade agreement is not construed to empower a party's authorities to undertake labor or environmental law enforcement activities in the territory of the United States.

(11) CURRENCY.—The principal negotiating objective of the United States with respect to currency practices is that parties to a trade agreement with the United States avoid manipulating exchange rates in order to prevent effective balance of payments adjustment or to gain an unfair competitive advantage over other parties to the agreement, such as through cooperative mechanisms, enforceable rules, reporting, monitoring, transparency, or other means, as appropriate.

(12) FOREIGN CURRENCY MANIPULATION.—The principal negotiating objective of the United States with respect to unfair currency practices is to seek to establish accountability through enforceable rules, transparency, reporting, monitoring, cooperative mechanisms, or other means to address exchange rate manipulation involving protracted large scale intervention in one direction in the exchange markets and a persistently undervalued foreign exchange rate to gain an unfair competitive advantage in trade over other parties to a trade agreement, consistent with existing obligations of the United States as a member of the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.

(13) WTO AND MULTILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS.—Recognizing that the World Trade Organization is the foundation of the global trading system, the principal negotiating objectives of the United States regarding the World Trade Organization, the Uruguay Round Agreements, and other multilateral and plurilateral trade agreements are—

(A) to achieve full implementation and extend the coverage of the World Trade Organization and multilateral and plurilateral agreements to products, sectors, and conditions of trade not adequately covered;

(B) to expand country participation in and enhancement of the Information Technology Agreement, the Government Procurement Agreement, and other plurilateral trade agreements of the World Trade Organization;

(C) to expand competitive market opportunities for United States exports and to obtain fairer and more open conditions of trade, including through utilization of global value chains, through the negotiation of new WTO multilateral and plurilateral trade agreements, such as an agreement on trade facilitation;

(D) to ensure that regional trade agreements to which the United States is not a party fully achieve the high standards of, and comply with, WTO disciplines, including Article XXIV of GATT 1994, Article V and V bis of the General Agreement on Trade in Services, and the Enabling Clause, including through meaningful WTO review of such regional trade agreements;

(E) to enhance compliance by WTO members with their obligations as WTO members through active participation in the bodies of the World Trade Organization by the United States and all other WTO members, including in the trade policy review mechanism and the committee system of the World Trade Organization, and by working to increase the effectiveness of such bodies; and

(F) to encourage greater cooperation between the World Trade Organization and other international organizations.

(14) TRADE INSTITUTION TRANSPARENCY.—The principal negotiating objective of the United States with respect to transparency is to obtain wider and broader application of the principle of transparency in the World Trade Organization, entities established under bilateral and regional trade agreements, and other international trade fora through seeking—

(A) timely public access to information regarding trade issues and the activities of such institutions;

(B) openness by ensuring public access to appropriate meetings, proceedings, and submissions, including with regard to trade and investment dispute settlement; and

(C) public access to all notifications and supporting documentation submitted by WTO members.

(15) ANTI-CORRUPTION.—The principal negotiating objectives of the United States with respect to the use of money or other things of value to influence acts, decisions, or omissions of foreign governments or officials or to secure any improper advantage in a manner affecting trade are—

(A) to obtain high standards and effective domestic enforcement mechanisms applicable to persons from all countries participating in the applicable trade agreement that prohibit such attempts to influence acts, decisions, or omissions of foreign governments or officials or to secure any such improper advantage;

(B) to ensure that such standards level the playing field for United States persons in international trade and investment; and

(C) to seek commitments to work jointly to encourage and support anti-corruption and anti-bribery initiatives in international trade fora, including through the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, done at Paris December 17, 1997 (commonly known as the ''OECD Anti-Bribery Convention'').

(16) DISPUTE SETTLEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT.—The principal negotiating objectives of the United States with respect to dispute settlement and enforcement of trade agreements are—

(A) to seek provisions in trade agreements providing for resolution of disputes between governments under those trade agreements in an effective, timely, transparent, equitable, and reasoned manner, requiring determinations based on facts and the principles of the agreements, with the goal of increasing compliance with the agreements;

(B) to seek to strengthen the capacity of the Trade Policy Review Mechanism of the World Trade Organization to review compliance with commitments;

(C) to seek adherence by panels convened under the Dispute Settlement Understanding and by the Appellate Body to—

(i) the mandate of those panels and the Appellate Body to apply the WTO Agreement as written, without adding to or diminishing rights and obligations under the Agreement; and

(ii) the standard of review applicable under the Uruguay Round Agreement involved in the dispute, including greater deference, where appropriate, to the fact finding and technical expertise of national investigating authorities;

(D) to seek provisions encouraging the early identification and settlement of disputes through consultation;

(E) to seek provisions to encourage the provision of trade-expanding compensation if a party to a dispute under the agreement does not come into compliance with its obligations under the agreement;

(F) to seek provisions to impose a penalty upon a party to a dispute under the agreement that—

(i) encourages compliance with the obligations of the agreement;

(ii) is appropriate to the parties, nature, subject matter, and scope of the violation; and

(iii) has the aim of not adversely affecting parties or interests not party to the dispute while maintaining the effectiveness of the enforcement mechanism; and

(G) to seek provisions that treat United States principal negotiating objectives equally with respect to—

(i) the ability to resort to dispute settlement under the applicable agreement;

(ii) the availability of equivalent dispute settlement procedures; and

(iii) the availability of equivalent remedies.

(17) TRADE REMEDY LAWS.—The principal negotiating objectives of the United States with respect to trade remedy laws are—

(A) to preserve the ability of the United States to enforce rigorously its trade laws, including the antidumping, countervailing duty, and safeguard laws, and avoid agreements that lessen the effectiveness of domestic and international disciplines on unfair trade, especially dumping and subsidies, or that lessen the effectiveness of domestic and international safeguard provisions, in order to ensure that United States workers, agricultural producers, and firms can compete fully on fair terms and enjoy the benefits of reciprocal trade concessions; and

(B) to address and remedy market distortions that lead to dumping and subsidization, including overcapacity, cartelization, and market access barriers.

(18) BORDER TAXES.—The principal negotiating objective of the United States regarding border taxes is to obtain a revision of the rules of the World Trade Organization with respect to the treatment of border adjustments for internal taxes to redress the disadvantage to countries relying primarily on direct taxes for revenue rather than indirect taxes.

(19) TEXTILE NEGOTIATIONS.—The principal negotiating objectives of the United States with respect to trade in textiles and apparel articles are to obtain competitive opportunities for United States exports of textiles and apparel in foreign markets substantially equivalent to the competitive opportunities afforded foreign exports in United States markets and to achieve fairer and more open conditions of trade in textiles and apparel.

(20) COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to an agreement that is proposed to be entered into with the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership countries and to which section 103(b) will apply, the principal negotiating objectives of the United States regarding commercial partnerships are the following:

(i) To discourage actions by potential trading partners that directly or indirectly prejudice or otherwise discourage commercial activity solely between the United States and Israel.

(ii) To discourage politically motivated actions to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel and to seek the elimination of politically motivated nontariff barriers on Israeli goods, services, or other commerce imposed on the State of Israel.

(iii) To seek the elimination of state-sponsored unsanctioned foreign boycotts against Israel or compliance with the Arab League Boycott of Israel by prospective trading partners.

(B) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term ''actions to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel'' means actions by states, non-member states of the United Nations, international organizations, or affiliated agencies of international organizations that are politically motivated and are intended to penalize or otherwise limit commercial relations specifically with Israel or persons doing business in Israel or in Israeli-controlled territories.

(21) GOOD GOVERNANCE, TRANSPARENCY, THE EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF LEGAL REGIMES, AND THE RULE OF LAW OF TRADING PARTNERS.—The principal negotiating objectives of the United States with respect to ensuring implementation of trade commitments and obligations by strengthening good governance, transparency, the effective operation of legal regimes and the rule of law of trading partners of the United States is through capacity building and other appropriate means, which are important parts of the broader effort to create more open democratic societies and to promote respect for internationally recognized human rights.

(c) CAPACITY BUILDING AND OTHER PRIORITIES.—In order to address and maintain United States competitiveness in the global economy, the President shall—

(1) direct the heads of relevant Federal agencies—

(A) to work to strengthen the capacity of United States trading partners to carry out obligations under trade agreements by consulting with any country seeking a trade agreement with the United States concerning that country's laws relating to customs and trade facilitation, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, intellectual property rights, labor, and the environment; and

(B) to provide technical assistance to that country if needed;

(2) seek to establish consultative mechanisms among parties to trade agreements to strengthen the capacity of United States trading partners to develop and implement standards for the protection of the environment and human health based on sound science;

(3) promote consideration of multilateral environmental agreements and consult with parties to such agreements regarding the consistency of any such agreement that includes trade measures with existing environmental exceptions under Article XX of GATT 1994; and

(4) submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate an annual report on capacity-building activities undertaken in connection with trade agreements negotiated or being negotiated pursuant to this title.

SEC. 103. TRADE AGREEMENTS AUTHORITY.

(a) AGREEMENTS REGARDING TARIFF BARRIERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Whenever the President determines that one or more existing duties or other import restrictions of any foreign country or the United States are unduly burdening and restricting the foreign trade of the United States and that the purposes, policies, priorities, and objectives of this title will be promoted thereby, the President—

(A) may enter into trade agreements with foreign countries before—

(i) July 1, 2018; or

(ii) July 1, 2021, if trade authorities procedures are extended under subsection (c); and

(B) may, subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), proclaim—

(i) such modification or continuance of any existing duty,

(ii) such continuance of existing duty free or excise treatment, or

(iii) such additional duties,

as the President determines to be required or appropriate to carry out any such trade agreement.

Substantial modifications to, or substantial additional provisions of, a trade agreement entered into after July 1, 2018, or July 1, 2021, if trade authorities procedures are extended under subsection (c), shall not be eligible for approval under this title.

(2) NOTIFICATION.—The President shall notify Congress of the President's intention to enter into an agreement under this subsection.

(3) LIMITATIONS.—No proclamation may be made under paragraph (1) that—

(A) reduces any rate of duty (other than a rate of duty that does not exceed 5 percent ad valorem on the date of the enactment of this Act) to a rate of duty which is less than 50 percent of the rate of such duty that applies on such date of enactment;

(B) reduces the rate of duty below that applicable under the Uruguay Round Agreements or a successor agreement, on any import sensitive agricultural product; or

(C) increases any rate of duty above the rate that applied on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(4) AGGREGATE REDUCTION; EXEMPTION FROM STAGING.—

(A) AGGREGATE REDUCTION.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the aggregate reduction in the rate of duty on any article which is in effect on any day pursuant to a trade agreement entered into under paragraph (1) shall not exceed the aggregate reduction which would have been in effect on such day if—

(i) a reduction of 3 percent ad valorem or a reduction of 1/10 of the total reduction, whichever is greater, had taken effect on the effective date of the first reduction proclaimed under paragraph (1) to carry out such agreement with respect to such article; and

(ii) a reduction equal to the amount applicable under clause (i) had taken effect at 1-year intervals after the effective date of such first reduction.

(B) EXEMPTION FROM STAGING.—No staging is required under subparagraph (A) with respect to a duty reduction that is proclaimed under paragraph (1) for an article of a kind that is not produced in the United States. The United States International Trade Commission shall advise the President of the identity of articles that may be exempted from staging under this subparagraph.

(5) ROUNDING.—If the President determines that such action will simplify the computation

of reductions under paragraph (4), the President may round an annual reduction by an amount equal to the lesser of—

(A) the difference between the reduction without regard to this paragraph and the next lower whole number; or

(B) ½ of 1 percent ad valorem.

(6) OTHER LIMITATIONS.—A rate of duty reduction that may not be proclaimed by reason of paragraph (3) may take effect only if a provision authorizing such reduction is included within an implementing bill provided for under section 106 and that bill is enacted into law.

(7) OTHER TARIFF MODIFICATIONS.—Notwithstanding paragraphs (1)(B), (3)(A), (3)(C), and (4) through (6), and subject to the consultation and layover requirements of section 115 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3524), the President may proclaim the modification of any duty or staged rate reduction of any duty set forth in Schedule XX, as defined in section 2(5) of that Act (19 U.S.C. 3501(5)), if the United States agrees to such modification or staged rate reduction in a negotiation for the reciprocal elimination or harmonization of duties under the auspices of the World Trade Organization.

(8) AUTHORITY UNDER URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENTS ACT NOT AFFECTED.—Nothing in this subsection shall limit the authority provided to the President under section 111(b) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3521(b)).

(b) AGREEMENTS REGARDING TARIFF AND NONTARIFF BARRIERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—(A) Whenever the President determines that—

(i) 1 or more existing duties or any other import restriction of any foreign country or the United States or any other barrier to, or other distortion of, international trade unduly burdens or restricts the foreign trade of the United States or adversely affects the United States economy, or

(ii) the imposition of any such barrier or distortion is likely to result in such a burden, restriction, or effect,

and that the purposes, policies, priorities, and objectives of this title will be promoted thereby, the President may enter into a trade agreement described in subparagraph (B) during the period described in subparagraph (C).

(B) The President may enter into a trade agreement under subparagraph (A) with foreign countries providing for—

(i) the reduction or elimination of a duty, restriction, barrier, or other distortion described in subparagraph (A); or

(ii) the prohibition of, or limitation on the imposition of, such barrier or other distortion.

(C) The President may enter into a trade agreement under this paragraph before—

(i) July 1, 2018; or

(ii) July 1, 2021, if trade authorities procedures are extended under subsection (c).

Substantial modifications to, or substantial additional provisions of, a trade agreement entered into after July 1, 2018, or July 1, 2021, if trade authorities procedures are extended under subsection (c), shall not be eligible for approval under this title.

(2) CONDITIONS.—A trade agreement may be entered into under this subsection only if such agreement makes progress in meeting the applicable objectives described in subsections (a) and (b) of section 102 and the President satisfies the conditions set forth in sections 104 and 105.

(3) BILLS QUALIFYING FOR TRADE AUTHORITIES PROCEDURES.—(A) The provisions of section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974 (in this title referred to as ''trade authorities procedures'') apply to a bill of either House of Congress which contains provisions described in subparagraph (B) to the same extent as such section 151 applies to implementing bills under that section. A bill to which this paragraph applies shall hereafter in this title be referred to as an ''implementing bill''.

(B) The provisions referred to in subparagraph (A) are—

(i) a provision approving a trade agreement entered into under this subsection and approving the statement of administrative action, if any, proposed to implement such trade agreement; and

(ii) if changes in existing laws or new statutory authority are required to implement such trade agreement or agreements, only such provisions as are strictly necessary or appropriate to implement such trade agreement or agreements, either repealing or amending existing laws or providing new statutory authority.

(c) EXTENSION DISAPPROVAL PROCESS FOR CONGRESSIONAL TRADE AUTHORITIES PROCEDURES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in section 106(b)—

(A) the trade authorities procedures apply to implementing bills submitted with respect to trade agreements entered into under subsection (b) before July 1, 2018; and

(B) the trade authorities procedures shall be extended to implementing bills submitted with respect to trade agreements entered into under subsection (b) after June 30, 2018, and before July 1, 2021, if (and only if)—

(i) the President requests such extension under paragraph (2); and

(ii) neither House of Congress adopts an extension disapproval resolution under paragraph (5) before July 1, 2018.

(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS BY THE PRESIDENT.—If the President is of the opinion that the trade authorities procedures should be extended to implementing bills described in paragraph (1)(B), the President shall submit to Congress, not later than April 1, 2018, a written report that contains a request for such extension, together with—

(A) a description of all trade agreements that have been negotiated under subsection (b) and the anticipated schedule for submitting such agreements to Congress for approval;

(B) a description of the progress that has been made in negotiations to achieve the purposes, policies, priorities, and objectives of this title, and a statement that such progress justifies the continuation of negotiations; and

(C) a statement of the reasons why the extension is needed to complete the negotiations.

(3) OTHER REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

(A) REPORT BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The President shall promptly inform the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations established under section 135 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2155) of the decision of the President to submit a report to Congress under paragraph (2). The Advisory Committee shall submit to Congress as soon as practicable, but not later than June 1, 2018, a written report that contains—

(i) its views regarding the progress that has been made in negotiations to achieve the purposes, policies, priorities, and objectives of this title; and

(ii) a statement of its views, and the reasons therefor, regarding whether the extension requested under paragraph (2) should be approved or disapproved.

(B) REPORT BY INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION.—The President shall promptly inform the United States International Trade Commission of the decision of the President to submit a report to Congress under paragraph (2). The International Trade Commission shall submit to Congress as soon as practicable, but not later than June 1, 2018, a written report that contains a review and analysis of the economic impact on the United States of all trade agreements implemented between the date of the enactment of this Act and the date on which the President decides to seek an extension requested under paragraph (2).

(4) STATUS OF REPORTS.—The reports submitted to Congress under paragraphs (2) and (3), or any portion of such reports, may be classified to the extent the President determines appropriate.

(5) EXTENSION DISAPPROVAL RESOLUTIONS.—(A) For purposes of paragraph (1), the term ''extension disapproval resolution'' means a resolution of either House of Congress, the sole matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: ''That the _____ disapproves the request of the President for the extension, under section 103(c)(1)(B)(i) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015, of the trade authorities procedures under that Act to any implementing bill submitted with respect to any trade agreement entered into under section 103(b) of that Act after June 30, 2018.'', with the blank space being filled with the name of the resolving House of Congress.

(B) Extension disapproval resolutions—

(i) may be introduced in either House of Congress by any member of such House; and

(ii) shall be referred, in the House of Representatives, to the Committee on Ways and Means and, in addition, to the Committee on Rules.

(C) The provisions of subsections (d) and (e) of section 152 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2192) (relating to the floor consideration of certain resolutions in the House and Senate) apply to extension disapproval resolutions.

(D) It is not in order for—

(i) the House of Representatives to consider any extension disapproval resolution not reported by the Committee on Ways and Means and, in addition, by the Committee on Rules;

(ii) the Senate to consider any extension disapproval resolution not reported by the Committee on Finance; or

(iii) either House of Congress to consider an extension disapproval resolution after June 30, 2018.

(d) COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS.—In order to contribute to the continued economic expansion of the United States, the President shall commence negotiations covering tariff and nontariff barriers affecting any industry, product, or service sector, and expand existing sectoral agreements to countries that are not parties to those agreements, in cases where the President determines that such negotiations are feasible and timely and would benefit the United States. Such sectors include agriculture, commercial services, intellectual property rights, industrial and capital goods, government procurement, information technology products, environmental technology and services, medical equipment and services, civil aircraft, and infrastructure products. In so doing, the President shall take into account all of the negotiating objectives set forth in section 102.

SEC. 104. CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT, CONSULTATIONS, AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION.

(a) CONSULTATIONS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.—

(1) CONSULTATIONS DURING NEGOTIATIONS.—In the course of negotiations conducted under this title, the United States Trade Representative shall—

(A) meet upon request with any Member of Congress regarding negotiating objectives, the status of negotiations in progress, and the nature of any changes in the laws of the United States or the administration of those laws that may be recommended to Congress to carry out any trade agreement or any requirement of, amendment to, or recommendation under, that agreement;

(B) upon request of any Member of Congress, provide access to pertinent documents relating to the negotiations, including classified materials;

(C) consult closely and on a timely basis with, and keep fully apprised of the negotiations, the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate;

(D) consult closely and on a timely basis with, and keep fully apprised of the negotiations, the House Advisory Group on Negotiations and the Senate Advisory Group on Negotiations convened under subsection (c) and all committees of

the House of Representatives and the Senate with jurisdiction over laws that could be affected by a trade agreement resulting from the negotiations; and

(E) with regard to any negotiations and agreement relating to agricultural trade, also consult closely and on a timely basis (including immediately before initialing an agreement) with, and keep fully apprised of the negotiations, the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

(2) CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO ENTRY INTO FORCE.—Prior to exchanging notes providing for the entry into force of a trade agreement, the United States Trade Representative shall consult closely and on a timely basis with Members of Congress and committees as specified in paragraph (1), and keep them fully apprised of the measures a trading partner has taken to comply with those provisions of the agreement that are to take effect on the date that the agreement enters into force.

(3) ENHANCED COORDINATION WITH CONGRESS.—

(A) WRITTEN GUIDELINES.—The United States Trade Representative, in consultation with the chairmen and the ranking members of the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, respectively—

(i) shall, not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, develop written guidelines on enhanced coordination with Congress, including coordination with designated congressional advisers under subsection (b), regarding negotiations conducted under this title; and

(ii) may make such revisions to the guidelines as may be necessary from time to time.

(B) CONTENT OF GUIDELINES.—The guidelines developed under subparagraph (A) shall enhance coordination with Congress through procedures to ensure—

(i) timely briefings upon request of any Member of Congress regarding negotiating objectives, the status of negotiations in progress conducted under this title, and the nature of any changes in the laws of the United States or the administration of those laws that may be recommended to Congress to carry out any trade agreement or any requirement of, amendment to, or recommendation under, that agreement; and

(ii) the sharing of detailed and timely information with Members of Congress, and their staff with proper security clearances as appropriate, regarding those negotiations and pertinent documents related to those negotiations (including classified information), and with committee staff with proper security clearances as would be appropriate in the light of the responsibilities of that committee over the trade agreements programs affected by those negotiations.

(C) DISSEMINATION.—The United States Trade Representative shall disseminate the guidelines developed under subparagraph (A) to all Federal agencies that could have jurisdiction over laws affected by trade negotiations.

(b) DESIGNATED CONGRESSIONAL ADVISERS.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—

(A) HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—In each Congress, any Member of the House of Representatives may be designated as a congressional adviser on trade policy and negotiations by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, after consulting with the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the chairman and ranking member of the committee from which the Member will be selected.

(B) SENATE.—In each Congress, any Member of the Senate may be designated as a congressional adviser on trade policy and negotiations by the President pro tempore of the Senate, after consultation with the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Finance and the chairman and ranking member of the committee from which the Member will be selected.

(2) CONSULTATIONS WITH DESIGNATED CONGRESSIONAL ADVISERS.—In the course of negotiations conducted under this title, the United States Trade Representative shall consult closely and on a timely basis (including immediately before initialing an agreement) with, and keep fully apprised of the negotiations, the congressional advisers for trade policy and negotiations designated under paragraph (1).

(3) ACCREDITATION.—Each Member of Congress designated as a congressional adviser under paragraph (1) shall be accredited by the United States Trade Representative on behalf of the President as an official adviser to the United States delegations to international conferences, meetings, and negotiating sessions relating to trade agreements.

(c) CONGRESSIONAL ADVISORY GROUPS ON NEGOTIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—By not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than 30 days after the convening of each Congress, the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives shall convene the House Advisory Group on Negotiations and the chairman of the Committee on Finance of the Senate shall convene the Senate Advisory Group on Negotiations (in this subsection referred to collectively as the ''congressional advisory groups'').

(2) MEMBERS AND FUNCTIONS.—

(A) MEMBERSHIP OF THE HOUSE ADVISORY GROUP ON NEGOTIATIONS.—In each Congress, the House Advisory Group on Negotiations shall be comprised of the following Members of the House of Representatives:

(i) The chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means, and 3 additional members of such Committee (not more than 2 of whom are members of the same political party).

(ii) The chairman and ranking member, or their designees, of the committees of the House of Representatives that would have, under the Rules of the House of Representatives, jurisdiction over provisions of law affected by a trade agreement negotiation conducted at any time during that Congress and to which this title would apply.

(B) MEMBERSHIP OF THE SENATE ADVISORY GROUP ON NEGOTIATIONS.—In each Congress, the Senate Advisory Group on Negotiations shall be comprised of the following Members of the Senate:

(i) The chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Finance and 3 additional members of such Committee (not more than 2 of whom are members of the same political party).

(ii) The chairman and ranking member, or their designees, of the committees of the Senate that would have, under the Rules of the Senate, jurisdiction over provisions of law affected by a trade agreement negotiation conducted at any time during that Congress and to which this title would apply.

(C) ACCREDITATION.—Each member of the congressional advisory groups described in subparagraphs (A)(i) and (B)(i) shall be accredited by the United States Trade Representative on behalf of the President as an official adviser to the United States delegation in negotiations for any trade agreement to which this title applies. Each member of the congressional advisory groups described in subparagraphs (A)(ii) and (B)(ii) shall be accredited by the United States Trade Representative on behalf of the President as an official adviser to the United States delegation in the negotiations by reason of which the member is in one of the congressional advisory groups.

(D) CONSULTATION AND ADVICE.—The congressional advisory groups shall consult with and provide advice to the Trade Representative regarding the formulation of specific objectives, negotiating strategies and positions, the development of the applicable trade agreement, and compliance and enforcement of the negotiated commitments under the trade agreement.

(E) CHAIR.—The House Advisory Group on Negotiations shall be chaired by the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Senate Advisory Group on Negotiations shall be chaired by the Chairman of the Committee on Finance of the Senate.

(F) COORDINATION WITH OTHER COMMITTEES.—Members of any committee represented on one of the congressional advisory groups may submit comments to the member of the appropriate congressional advisory group from that committee regarding any matter related to a negotiation for any trade agreement to which this title applies.

(3) GUIDELINES.—

(A) PURPOSE AND REVISION.—The United States Trade Representative, in consultation with the chairmen and the ranking members of the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, respectively—

(i) shall, not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, develop written guidelines to facilitate the useful and timely exchange of information between the Trade Representative and the congressional advisory groups; and

(ii) may make such revisions to the guidelines as may be necessary from time to time.

(B) CONTENT.—The guidelines developed under subparagraph (A) shall provide for, among other things—

(i) detailed briefings on a fixed timetable to be specified in the guidelines of the congressional advisory groups regarding negotiating objectives and positions and the status of the applicable negotiations, beginning as soon as practicable after the congressional advisory groups are convened, with more frequent briefings as trade negotiations enter the final stage;

(ii) access by members of the congressional advisory groups, and staff with proper security clearances, to pertinent documents relating to the negotiations, including classified materials;

(iii) the closest practicable coordination between the Trade Representative and the congressional advisory groups at all critical periods during the negotiations, including at negotiation sites;

(iv) after the applicable trade agreement is concluded, consultation regarding ongoing compliance and enforcement of negotiated commitments under the trade agreement; and

(v) the timeframe for submitting the report required under section 105(d)(3).

(4) REQUEST FOR MEETING.—Upon the request of a majority of either of the congressional advisory groups, the President shall meet with that congressional advisory group before initiating negotiations with respect to a trade agreement, or at any other time concerning the negotiations.

(d) CONSULTATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC.—

(1) GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT.—The United States Trade Representative, in consultation with the chairmen and the ranking members of the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, respectively—

(A) shall, not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, develop written guidelines on public access to information regarding negotiations conducted under this title; and

(B) may make such revisions to the guidelines as may be necessary from time to time.

(2) PURPOSES.—The guidelines developed under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) facilitate transparency;

(B) encourage public participation; and

(C) promote collaboration in the negotiation process.

(3) CONTENT.—The guidelines developed under paragraph (1) shall include procedures that—

(A) provide for rapid disclosure of information in forms that the public can readily find and use; and

(B) provide frequent opportunities for public input through Federal Register requests for comment and other means.

(4) DISSEMINATION.—The United States Trade Representative shall disseminate the guidelines developed under paragraph (1) to all Federal agencies that could have jurisdiction over laws affected by trade negotiations.

(e) CONSULTATIONS WITH ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—

(1) GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—The United States Trade Representative, in consultation with the chairmen and the ranking members of the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, respectively—

(A) shall, not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, develop written guidelines on enhanced coordination with advisory committees established pursuant to section 135 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2155) regarding negotiations conducted under this title; and

(B) may make such revisions to the guidelines as may be necessary from time to time.

(2) CONTENT.—The guidelines developed under paragraph (1) shall enhance coordination with advisory committees described in that paragraph through procedures to ensure—

(A) timely briefings of advisory committees and regular opportunities for advisory committees to provide input throughout the negotiation process on matters relevant to the sectors or functional areas represented by those committees; and

(B) the sharing of detailed and timely information with each member of an advisory committee regarding negotiations and pertinent documents related to the negotiation (including classified information) on matters relevant to the sectors or functional areas the member represents, and with a designee with proper security clearances of each such member as appropriate.

(3) DISSEMINATION.—The United States Trade Representative shall disseminate the guidelines developed under paragraph (1) to all Federal agencies that could have jurisdiction over laws affected by trade negotiations.

(f) ESTABLISHMENT OF POSITION OF CHIEF TRANSPARENCY OFFICER IN THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE.—Section 141(b) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2171(b)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) There shall be in the Office one Chief Transparency Officer. The Chief Transparency Officer shall consult with Congress on transparency policy, coordinate transparency in trade negotiations, engage and assist the public, and advise the United States Trade Representative on transparency policy.''.

SEC. 105. NOTICE, CONSULTATIONS, AND REPORTS.

(a) NOTICE, CONSULTATIONS, AND REPORTS BEFORE NEGOTIATION.—

(1) NOTICE.—The President, with respect to any agreement that is subject to the provisions of section 103(b), shall—

(A) provide, at least 90 calendar days before initiating negotiations with a country, written notice to Congress of the President's intention to enter into the negotiations with that country and set forth in the notice the date on which the President intends to initiate those negotiations, the specific United States objectives for the negotiations with that country, and whether the President intends to seek an agreement, or changes to an existing agreement;

(B) before and after submission of the notice, consult regarding the negotiations with the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, such other committees of the House and Senate as the President deems appropriate, and the House Advisory Group on Negotiations and the Senate Advisory Group on Negotiations convened under section 104(c);

(C) upon the request of a majority of the members of either the House Advisory Group on Negotiations or the Senate Advisory Group on Negotiations convened under section 104(c), meet with the requesting congressional advisory group before initiating the negotiations or at any other time concerning the negotiations; and

(D) after consulting with the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Finance, and at least 30 calendar days before initiating negotiations with a country, publish on a publicly available Internet website of the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and regularly update thereafter, a detailed and comprehensive summary of the specific objectives with respect to the negotiations, and a description of how the agreement, if successfully concluded, will further those objectives and benefit the United States.

(2) NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING AGRICULTURE.—

(A) ASSESSMENT AND CONSULTATIONS FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT.—Before initiating or continuing negotiations the subject matter of which is directly related to the subject matter under section 102(b)(3)(B) with any country, the President shall—

(i) assess whether United States tariffs on agricultural products that were bound under the Uruguay Round Agreements are lower than the tariffs bound by that country;

(ii) consider whether the tariff levels bound and applied throughout the world with respect to imports from the United States are higher than United States tariffs and whether the negotiation provides an opportunity to address any such disparity; and

(iii) consult with the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate concerning the results of the assessment, whether it is appropriate for the United States to agree to further tariff reductions based on the conclusions reached in the assessment, and how all applicable negotiating objectives will be met.

(B) SPECIAL CONSULTATIONS ON IMPORT SENSITIVE PRODUCTS.—(i) Before initiating negotiations with regard to agriculture and, with respect to agreements described in paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 107(a), as soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the United States Trade Representative shall—

(I) identify those agricultural products subject to tariff rate quotas on the date of enactment of this Act, and agricultural products subject to tariff reductions by the United States as a result of the Uruguay Round Agreements, for which the rate of duty was reduced on January 1, 1995, to a rate which was not less than 97.5 percent of the rate of duty that applied to such article on December 31, 1994;

(II) consult with the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate concerning—

(aa) whether any further tariff reductions on the products identified under subclause (I) should be appropriate, taking into account the impact of any such tariff reduction on the United States industry producing the product concerned;

(bb) whether the products so identified face unjustified sanitary or phytosanitary restrictions, including those not based on scientific principles in contravention of the Uruguay Round Agreements; and

(cc) whether the countries participating in the negotiations maintain export subsidies or other programs, policies, or practices that distort world trade in such products and the impact of such programs, policies, and practices on United States producers of the products;

(III) request that the International Trade Commission prepare an assessment of the probable economic effects of any such tariff reduction on the United States industry producing the product concerned and on the United States economy as a whole; and

(IV) upon complying with subclauses (I), (II), and (III), notify the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate of those products identified under subclause (I) for which the Trade Representative intends to seek tariff liberalization in the negotiations and the reasons for seeking such tariff liberalization.

(ii) If, after negotiations described in clause (i) are commenced—

(I) the United States Trade Representative identifies any additional agricultural product described in clause (i)(I) for tariff reductions which were not the subject of a notification under clause (i)(IV), or

(II) any additional agricultural product described in clause (i)(I) is the subject of a request for tariff reductions by a party to the negotiations,

the Trade Representative shall, as soon as practicable, notify the committees referred to in clause (i)(IV) of those products and the reasons for seeking such tariff reductions.

(3) NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING THE FISHING INDUSTRY.—Before initiating, or continuing, negotiations that directly relate to fish or shellfish trade with any country, the President shall consult with the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and shall keep the Committees apprised of the negotiations on an ongoing and timely basis.

(4) NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING TEXTILES.—Before initiating or continuing negotiations the subject matter of which is directly related to textiles and apparel products with any country, the President shall—

(A) assess whether United States tariffs on textile and apparel products that were bound under the Uruguay Round Agreements are lower than the tariffs bound by that country and whether the negotiation provides an opportunity to address any such disparity; and

(B) consult with the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate concerning the results of the assessment, whether it is appropriate for the United States to agree to further tariff reductions based on the conclusions reached in the assessment, and how all applicable negotiating objectives will be met.

(5) ADHERENCE TO EXISTING INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT AGREEMENT OBLIGATIONS.—In determining whether to enter into negotiations with a particular country, the President shall take into account the extent to which that country has implemented, or has accelerated the implementation of, its international trade and investment commitments to the United States, including pursuant to the WTO Agreement.

(b) CONSULTATION WITH CONGRESS BEFORE ENTRY INTO AGREEMENT.—

(1) CONSULTATION.—Before entering into any trade agreement under section 103(b), the President shall consult with—

(A) the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate;

(B) each other committee of the House and the Senate, and each joint committee of Congress, which has jurisdiction over legislation involving subject matters which would be affected by the trade agreement; and

(C) the House Advisory Group on Negotiations and the Senate Advisory Group on Negotiations convened under section 104(c).

(2) SCOPE.—The consultation described in paragraph (1) shall include consultation with respect to—

(A) the nature of the agreement;

(B) how and to what extent the agreement will achieve the applicable purposes, policies, priorities, and objectives of this title; and

(C) the implementation of the agreement under section 106, including the general effect of the agreement on existing laws.

(3) REPORT REGARDING UNITED STATES TRADE REMEDY LAWS.—

(A) CHANGES IN CERTAIN TRADE LAWS.—The President, not less than 180 calendar days before the day on which the President enters into a trade agreement under section 103(b), shall report to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate—

(i) the range of proposals advanced in the negotiations with respect to that agreement, that may be in the final agreement, and that could require amendments to title VII of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1671 et seq.) or to chapter 1 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2251 et seq.); and

(ii) how these proposals relate to the objectives described in section 102(b)(16).

(B) RESOLUTIONS.—(i) At any time after the transmission of the report under subparagraph (A), if a resolution is introduced with respect to that report in either House of Congress, the procedures set forth in clauses (iii) through (vii) shall apply to that resolution if—

(I) no other resolution with respect to that report has previously been reported in that House of Congress by the Committee on Ways and Means or the Committee on Finance, as the case may be, pursuant to those procedures; and

(II) no procedural disapproval resolution under section 106(b) introduced with respect to a trade agreement entered into pursuant to the negotiations to which the report under subparagraph (A) relates has previously been reported in that House of Congress by the Committee on Ways and Means or the Committee on Finance, as the case may be.

(ii) For purposes of this subparagraph, the term ''resolution'' means only a resolution of either House of Congress, the matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: ''That the _____ finds that the proposed changes to United States trade remedy laws contained in the report of the President transmitted to Congress on _____ under section 105(b)(3) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 with respect to _____, are inconsistent with the negotiating objectives described in section 102(b)(16) of that Act.'', with the first blank space being filled with the name of the resolving House of Congress, the second blank space being filled with the appropriate date of the report, and the third blank space being filled with the name of the country or countries involved.

(iii) Resolutions in the House of Representatives—

(I) may be introduced by any Member of the House;

(II) shall be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and, in addition, to the Committee on Rules; and

(III) may not be amended by either Committee.

(iv) Resolutions in the Senate—

(I) may be introduced by any Member of the Senate;

(II) shall be referred to the Committee on Finance; and

(III) may not be amended.

(v) It is not in order for the House of Representatives to consider any resolution that is not reported by the Committee on Ways and Means and, in addition, by the Committee on Rules.

(vi) It is not in order for the Senate to consider any resolution that is not reported by the Committee on Finance.

(vii) The provisions of subsections (d) and (e) of section 152 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2192) (relating to floor consideration of certain resolutions in the House and Senate) shall apply to resolutions.

(4) ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS.—The report required under section 135(e)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2155(e)(1)) regarding any trade agreement entered into under subsection (a) or (b) of section 103 shall be provided to the President, Congress, and the United States Trade Representative not later than 30 days after the date on which the President notifies Congress under section 103(a)(2) or 106(a)(1)(A) of the intention of the President to enter into the agreement.

(c) INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION ASSESSMENT.—

(1) SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION TO COMMISSION.—The President, not later than 90 calendar days before the day on which the President enters into a trade agreement under section 103(b), shall provide the International Trade Commission (referred to in this subsection as the ''Commission'') with the details of the agreement as it exists at that time and request the Commission to prepare and submit an assessment of the agreement as described in paragraph (2). Between the time the President makes the request under this paragraph and the time the Commission submits the assessment, the President shall keep the Commission current with respect to the details of the agreement.

(2) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 105 calendar days after the President enters into a trade agreement under section 103(b), the Commission shall submit to the President and Congress a report assessing the likely impact of the agreement on the United States economy as a whole and on specific industry sectors, including the impact the agreement will have on the gross domestic product, exports and imports, aggregate employment and employment opportunities, the production, employment, and competitive position of industries likely to be significantly affected by the agreement, and the interests of United States consumers.

(3) REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL LITERATURE.—In preparing the assessment under paragraph (2), the Commission shall review available economic assessments regarding the agreement, including literature regarding any substantially equivalent proposed agreement, and shall provide in its assessment a description of the analyses used and conclusions drawn in such literature, and a discussion of areas of consensus and divergence between the various analyses and conclusions, including those of the Commission regarding the agreement.

(4) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The President shall make each assessment under paragraph (2) available to the public.

(d) REPORTS SUBMITTED TO COMMITTEES WITH AGREEMENT.—

(1) ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS AND REPORTS.—The President shall—

(A) conduct environmental reviews of future trade and investment agreements, consistent with Executive Order 13141 (64 Fed. Reg. 63169), dated November 16, 1999, and its relevant guidelines; and

(B) submit a report on those reviews and on the content and operation of consultative mechanisms established pursuant to section 102(c) to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate at the time the President submits to Congress a copy of the final legal text of an agreement pursuant to section 106(a)(1)(E).

(2) EMPLOYMENT IMPACT REVIEWS AND REPORTS.—The President shall—

(A) review the impact of future trade agreements on United States employment, including labor markets, modeled after Executive Order 13141 (64 Fed. Reg. 63169) to the extent appropriate in establishing procedures and criteria; and

(B) submit a report on such reviews to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate at the time the President submits to Congress a copy of the final legal text of an agreement pursuant to section 106(a)(1)(E).

(3) REPORT ON LABOR RIGHTS.—The President shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, on a timeframe determined in accordance with section 104(c)(3)(B)(v)—

(A) a meaningful labor rights report of the country, or countries, with respect to which the President is negotiating; and

(B) a description of any provisions that would require changes to the labor laws and labor practices of the United States.

(4) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The President shall make all reports required under this subsection available to the public.

(e) IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—At the time the President submits to Congress a copy of the final legal text of an agreement pursuant to section 106(a)(1)(E), the President shall also submit to Congress a plan for implementing and enforcing the agreement.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The implementation and enforcement plan required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) BORDER PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS.—A description of additional personnel required at border entry points, including a list of additional customs and agricultural inspectors.

(B) AGENCY STAFFING REQUIREMENTS.—A description of additional personnel required by Federal agencies responsible for monitoring and implementing the trade agreement, including personnel required by the Office of the United States Trade Representative, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture (including additional personnel required to implement sanitary and phytosanitary measures in order to obtain market access for United States exports), the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of the Treasury, and such other agencies as may be necessary.

(C) CUSTOMS INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS.—A description of the additional equipment and facilities needed by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

(D) IMPACT ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—A description of the impact the trade agreement will have on State and local governments as a result of increases in trade.

(E) COST ANALYSIS.—An analysis of the costs associated with each of the items listed in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

(3) BUDGET SUBMISSION.—The President shall include a request for the resources necessary to support the plan required by paragraph (1) in the first budget of the President submitted to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, after the date of the submission of the plan.

(4) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The President shall make the plan required under this subsection available to the public.

(f) OTHER REPORTS.—

(1) REPORT ON PENALTIES.—Not later than one year after the imposition by the United States of a penalty or remedy permitted by a trade agreement to which this title applies, the President shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on the effectiveness of the penalty or remedy applied under United States law in enforcing United States rights under the trade agreement, which shall address whether the penalty or remedy was effective in changing the behavior of the targeted party and whether the penalty or remedy had any adverse impact on parties or interests not party to the dispute.

(2) REPORT ON IMPACT OF TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than 5 years thereafter, the United States International Trade Commission shall submit to the

Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on the economic impact on the United States of all trade agreements with respect to which Congress has enacted an implementing bill under trade authorities procedures since January 1, 1984.

(3) ENFORCEMENT CONSULTATIONS AND REPORTS.—(A) The United States Trade Representative shall consult with the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate after acceptance of a petition for review or taking an enforcement action in regard to an obligation under a trade agreement, including a labor or environmental obligation. During such consultations, the United States Trade Representative shall describe the matter, including the basis for such action and the application of any relevant legal obligations.

(B) As part of the report required pursuant to section 163 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2213), the President shall report annually to Congress on enforcement actions taken pursuant to a trade agreement to which the United States is a party, as well as on any public reports issued by Federal agencies on enforcement matters relating to a trade agreement.

(g) ADDITIONAL COORDINATION WITH MEMBERS.—Any Member of the House of Representatives may submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and any Member of the Senate may submit to the Committee on Finance of the Senate the views of that Member on any matter relevant to a proposed trade agreement, and the relevant Committee shall receive those views for consideration.

SEC. 106. IMPLEMENTATION OF TRADE AGREEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) NOTIFICATION AND SUBMISSION.—Any agreement entered into under section 103(b) shall enter into force with respect to the United States if (and only if)—

(A) the President, at least 90 calendar days before the day on which the President enters into the trade agreement, notifies the House of Representatives and the Senate of the President's intention to enter into the agreement, and promptly thereafter publishes notice of such intention in the Federal Register;

(B) the President, at least 60 days before the day on which the President enters into the agreement, publishes the text of the agreement on a publicly available Internet website of the Office of the United States Trade Representative;

(C) within 60 days after entering into the agreement, the President submits to Congress a description of those changes to existing laws that the President considers would be required in order to bring the United States into compliance with the agreement;

(D) the President, at least 30 days before submitting to Congress the materials under subparagraph (E), submits to Congress—

(i) a draft statement of any administrative action proposed to implement the agreement; and

(ii) a copy of the final legal text of the agreement;

(E) after entering into the agreement, the President submits to Congress, on a day on which both Houses of Congress are in session, a copy of the final legal text of the agreement, together with—

(i) a draft of an implementing bill described in section 103(b)(3);

(ii) a statement of any administrative action proposed to implement the trade agreement; and

(iii) the supporting information described in paragraph (2)(A);

(F) the implementing bill is enacted into law; and

(G) the President, not later than 30 days before the date on which the agreement enters into force with respect to a party to the agreement, submits written notice to Congress that the President has determined that the party has taken measures necessary to comply with those provisions of the agreement that are to take effect on the date on which the agreement enters into force.

(2) SUPPORTING INFORMATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The supporting information required under paragraph (1)(E)(iii) consists of—

(i) an explanation as to how the implementing bill and proposed administrative action will change or affect existing law; and

(ii) a statement—

(I) asserting that the agreement makes progress in achieving the applicable purposes, policies, priorities, and objectives of this title; and

(II) setting forth the reasons of the President regarding—

(aa) how and to what extent the agreement makes progress in achieving the applicable purposes, policies, and objectives referred to in subclause (I);

(bb) whether and how the agreement changes provisions of an agreement previously negotiated;

(cc) how the agreement serves the interests of United States commerce; and

(dd) how the implementing bill meets the standards set forth in section 103(b)(3).

(B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The President shall make the supporting information described in subparagraph (A) available to the public.

(3) RECIPROCAL BENEFITS.—In order to ensure that a foreign country that is not a party to a trade agreement entered into under section 103(b) does not receive benefits under the agreement unless the country is also subject to the obligations under the agreement, the implementing bill submitted with respect to the agreement shall provide that the benefits and obligations under the agreement apply only to the parties to the agreement, if such application is consistent with the terms of the agreement. The implementing bill may also provide that the benefits and obligations under the agreement do not apply uniformly to all parties to the agreement, if such application is consistent with the terms of the agreement.

(4) DISCLOSURE OF COMMITMENTS.—Any agreement or other understanding with a foreign government or governments (whether oral or in writing) that—

(A) relates to a trade agreement with respect to which Congress enacts an implementing bill under trade authorities procedures; and

(B) is not disclosed to Congress before an implementing bill with respect to that agreement is introduced in either House of Congress,

shall not be considered to be part of the agreement approved by Congress and shall have no force and effect under United States law or in any dispute settlement body.

(b) LIMITATIONS ON TRADE AUTHORITIES PROCEDURES.—

(1) FOR LACK OF NOTICE OR CONSULTATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The trade authorities procedures shall not apply to any implementing bill submitted with respect to a trade agreement or trade agreements entered into under section 103(b) if during the 60-day period beginning on the date that one House of Congress agrees to a procedural disapproval resolution for lack of notice or consultations with respect to such trade agreement or agreements, the other House separately agrees to a procedural disapproval resolution with respect to such trade agreement or agreements.

(B) PROCEDURAL DISAPPROVAL RESOLUTION.—(i) For purposes of this paragraph, the term ''procedural disapproval resolution'' means a resolution of either House of Congress, the sole matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: ''That the President has failed or refused to notify or consult in accordance with the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 on negotiations with respect to _____ and, therefore, the trade authorities procedures under that Act shall not apply to any implementing bill submitted with respect to such trade agreement or agreements.'', with the blank space being filled with a description of the trade agreement or agreements with respect to which the President is considered to have failed or refused to notify or consult.

(ii) For purposes of clause (i) and paragraphs (3)(C) and (4)(C), the President has ''failed or refused to notify or consult in accordance with the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015'' on negotiations with respect to a trade agreement or trade agreements if—

(I) the President has failed or refused to consult (as the case may be) in accordance with sections 104 and 105 and this section with respect to the negotiations, agreement, or agreements;

(II) guidelines under section 104 have not been developed or met with respect to the negotiations, agreement, or agreements;

(III) the President has not met with the House Advisory Group on Negotiations or the Senate Advisory Group on Negotiations pursuant to a request made under section 104(c)(4) with respect to the negotiations, agreement, or agreements; or

(IV) the agreement or agreements fail to make progress in achieving the purposes, policies, priorities, and objectives of this title.

(2) PROCEDURES FOR CONSIDERING RESOLUTIONS.—(A) Procedural disapproval resolutions—

(i) in the House of Representatives—

(I) may be introduced by any Member of the House;

(II) shall be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and, in addition, to the Committee on Rules; and

(III) may not be amended by either Committee; and

(ii) in the Senate—

(I) may be introduced by any Member of the Senate;

(II) shall be referred to the Committee on Finance; and

(III) may not be amended.

(B) The provisions of subsections (d) and (e) of section 152 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2192) (relating to the floor consideration of certain resolutions in the House and Senate) apply to a procedural disapproval resolution introduced with respect to a trade agreement if no other procedural disapproval resolution with respect to that trade agreement has previously been reported in that House of Congress by the Committee on Ways and Means or the Committee on Finance, as the case may be, and if no resolution described in clause (ii) of section 105(b)(3)(B) with respect to that trade agreement has been reported in that House of Congress by the Committee on Ways and Means or the Committee on Finance, as the case may be, pursuant to the procedures set forth in clauses (iii) through (vii) of such section.

(C) It is not in order for the House of Representatives to consider any procedural disapproval resolution not reported by the Committee on Ways and Means and, in addition, by the Committee on Rules.

(D) It is not in order for the Senate to consider any procedural disapproval resolution not reported by the Committee on Finance.

(3) CONSIDERATION IN SENATE OF CONSULTATION AND COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION TO REMOVE TRADE AUTHORITIES PROCEDURES.—

(A) REPORTING OF RESOLUTION.—If, when the Committee on Finance of the Senate meets on whether to report an implementing bill with respect to a trade agreement or agreements entered into under section 103(b), the committee fails to favorably report the bill, the committee shall report a resolution described in subparagraph (C).

(B) APPLICABILITY OF TRADE AUTHORITIES PROCEDURES.—The trade authorities procedures

shall not apply in the Senate to any implementing bill submitted with respect to a trade agreement or agreements described in subparagraph (A) if the Committee on Finance reports a resolution described in subparagraph (C) and such resolution is agreed to by the Senate.

(C) RESOLUTION DESCRIBED.—A resolution described in this subparagraph is a resolution of the Senate originating from the Committee on Finance the sole matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: ''That the President has failed or refused to notify or consult in accordance with the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 on negotiations with respect to _____ and, therefore, the trade authorities procedures under that Act shall not apply in the Senate to any implementing bill submitted with respect to such trade agreement or agreements.'', with the blank space being filled with a description of the trade agreement or agreements described in subparagraph (A).

(D) PROCEDURES.—If the Senate does not agree to a motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to a resolution described in subparagraph (C), the resolution shall be committed to the Committee on Finance.

(4) CONSIDERATION IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF A CONSULTATION AND COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION.—

(A) QUALIFICATIONS FOR REPORTING RESOLUTION.—If—

(i) the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives reports an implementing bill with respect to a trade agreement or agreements entered into under section 103(b) with other than a favorable recommendation; and

(ii) a Member of the House of Representatives has introduced a consultation and compliance resolution on the legislative day following the filing of a report to accompany the implementing bill with other than a favorable recommendation,

then the Committee on Ways and Means shall consider a consultation and compliance resolution pursuant to subparagraph (B).

(B) COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF A QUALIFYING RESOLUTION.—(i) Not later than the fourth legislative day after the date of introduction of the resolution, the Committee on Ways and Means shall meet to consider a resolution meeting the qualifications set forth in subparagraph (A).

(ii) After consideration of one such resolution by the Committee on Ways and Means, this subparagraph shall not apply to any other such resolution.

(iii) If the Committee on Ways and Means has not reported the resolution by the sixth legislative day after the date of its introduction, that committee shall be discharged from further consideration of the resolution.

(C) CONSULTATION AND COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION DESCRIBED.—A consultation and compliance resolution—

(i) is a resolution of the House of Representatives, the sole matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: ''That the President has failed or refused to notify or consult in accordance with the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 on negotiations with respect to _____ and, therefore, the trade authorities procedures under that Act shall not apply in the House of Representatives to any implementing bill submitted with respect to such trade agreement or agreements.'', with the blank space being filled with a description of the trade agreement or agreements described in subparagraph (A); and

(ii) shall be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

(D) APPLICABILITY OF TRADE AUTHORITIES PROCEDURES.—The trade authorities procedures shall not apply in the House of Representatives to any implementing bill submitted with respect to a trade agreement or agreements which are the object of a consultation and compliance resolution if such resolution is adopted by the House.

(5) FOR FAILURE TO MEET OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than December 15, 2015, the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Attorney General, and the United States Trade Representative, shall transmit to Congress a report setting forth the strategy of the executive branch to address concerns of Congress regarding whether dispute settlement panels and the Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization have added to obligations, or diminished rights, of the United States, as described in section 102(b)(15)(C). Trade authorities procedures shall not apply to any implementing bill with respect to an agreement negotiated under the auspices of the World Trade Organization unless the Secretary of Commerce has issued such report by the deadline specified in this paragraph.

(6) LIMITATIONS ON PROCEDURES WITH RESPECT TO AGREEMENTS WITH COUNTRIES NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION ACT OF 2000.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The trade authorities procedures shall not apply to any implementing bill submitted with respect to a trade agreement or trade agreements entered into under section 103(b) with a country to which the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking are applicable and the government of which does not fully comply with such standards and is not making significant efforts to bring the country into compliance (commonly referred to as a ''tier 3'' country), as determined in the most recent annual report on trafficking in persons submitted under section 110(b)(1) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7107(b)(1)).

(B) MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF TRAFFICKING DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term ''minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking'' means the standards set forth in section 108 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7106).

(c) RULES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—Subsection (b) of this section, section 103(c), and section 105(b)(3) are enacted by Congress—

(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the House of Representatives and the Senate, respectively, and as such are deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, and such procedures supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent with such other rules; and

(2) with the full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedures of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as any other rule of that House.

SEC. 107. TREATMENT OF CERTAIN TRADE AGREEMENTS FOR WHICH NEGOTIATIONS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN.

(a) CERTAIN AGREEMENTS.—Notwithstanding the prenegotiation notification and consultation requirement described in section 105(a), if an agreement to which section 103(b) applies—

(1) is entered into under the auspices of the World Trade Organization,

(2) is entered into with the Trans-Pacific Partnership countries with respect to which notifications have been made in a manner consistent with section 105(a)(1)(A) as of the date of the enactment of this Act,

(3) is entered into with the European Union,

(4) is an agreement with respect to international trade in services entered into with WTO members with respect to which a notification has been made in a manner consistent with section 105(a)(1)(A) as of the date of the enactment of this Act, or

(5) is an agreement with respect to environmental goods entered into with WTO members with respect to which a notification has been made in a manner consistent with section 105(a)(1)(A) as of the date of the enactment of this Act,

and results from negotiations that were commenced before the date of the enactment of this Act, subsection (b) shall apply.

(b) TREATMENT OF AGREEMENTS.—In the case of any agreement to which subsection (a) applies, the applicability of the trade authorities procedures to implementing bills shall be determined without regard to the requirements of section 105(a) (relating only to notice prior to initiating negotiations), and any resolution under paragraph (1)(B), (3)(C), or (4)(C) of section 106(b) shall not be in order on the basis of a failure or refusal to comply with the provisions of section 105(a), if (and only if) the President, as soon as feasible after the date of the enactment of this Act—

(1) notifies Congress of the negotiations described in subsection (a), the specific United States objectives in the negotiations, and whether the President is seeking a new agreement or changes to an existing agreement; and

(2) before and after submission of the notice, consults regarding the negotiations with the committees referred to in section 105(a)(1)(B) and the House and Senate Advisory Groups on Negotiations convened under section 104(c).

SEC. 108. SOVEREIGNTY.

(a) UNITED STATES LAW TO PREVAIL IN EVENT OF CONFLICT.—No provision of any trade agreement entered into under section 103(b), nor the application of any such provision to any person or circumstance, that is inconsistent with any law of the United States, any State of the United States, or any locality of the United States shall have effect.

(b) AMENDMENTS OR MODIFICATIONS OF UNITED STATES LAW.—No provision of any trade agreement entered into under section 103(b) shall prevent the United States, any State of the United States, or any locality of the United States from amending or modifying any law of the United States, that State, or that locality (as the case may be).

(c) DISPUTE SETTLEMENT REPORTS.—Reports, including findings and recommendations, issued by dispute settlement panels convened pursuant to any trade agreement entered into under section 103(b) shall have no binding effect on the law of the United States, the Government of the United States, or the law or government of any State or locality of the United States.

SEC. 109. INTERESTS OF SMALL BUSINESSES.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States Trade Representative should facilitate participation by small businesses in the trade negotiation process; and

(2) the functions of the Office of the United States Trade Representative relating to small businesses should continue to be reflected in the title of the Assistant United States Trade Representative assigned the responsibility for small businesses.

(b) CONSIDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESS INTERESTS.—The Assistant United States Trade Representative for Small Business, Market Access, and Industrial Competitiveness shall be responsible for ensuring that the interests of small businesses are considered in all trade negotiations in accordance with the objective described in section 102(a)(8).

SEC. 110. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS; APPLICATION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS.

(a) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) ADVICE FROM UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION.—Section 131 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2151) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in paragraph (1), by striking ''section 2103(a) or (b) of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''subsection (a) or (b) of section 103 of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''; and

(ii) in paragraph (2), by striking ''section 2103(b) of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''section 103(b) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015'';

(B) in subsection (b), by striking ''section 2103(a)(3)(A) of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''section 103(a)(4)(A) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''; and

(C) in subsection (c), by striking ''section 2103 of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''section 103(a) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''.

(2) HEARINGS.—Section 132 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2152) is amended by striking ''section 2103 of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''section 103 of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''.

(3) PUBLIC HEARINGS.—Section 133(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2153(a)) is amended by striking ''section 2103 of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''section 103 of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''.

(4) PREREQUISITES FOR OFFERS.—Section 134 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2154) is amended by striking ''section 2103 of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' each place it appears and inserting ''section 103 of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''.

(5) INFORMATION AND ADVICE FROM PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS.—Section 135 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2155) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)(1)(A), by striking ''section 2103 of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''section 103 of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''; and

(B) in subsection (e)—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) by striking ''section 2103 of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' each place it appears and inserting ''section 103 of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''; and

(II) by striking ''not later than the date on which the President notifies the Congress under section 2105(a)(1)(A) of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''not later than the date that is 30 days after the date on which the President notifies Congress under section 106(a)(1)(A) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''; and

(ii) in paragraph (2), by striking ''section 2102 of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''section 102 of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''.

(6) PROCEDURES RELATING TO IMPLEMENTING BILLS.—Section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2191) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)(1), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''section 2105(a)(1) of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''section 106(a)(1) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''; and

(B) in subsection (c)(1), by striking ''section 2105(a)(1) of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''section 106(a)(1) of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''.

(7) TRANSMISSION OF AGREEMENTS TO CONGRESS.—Section 162(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2212(a)) is amended by striking ''section 2103 of the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2002'' and inserting ''section 103 of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015''.

(b) APPLICATION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS.—For purposes of applying sections 125, 126, and 127 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2135, 2136, and 2137)—

(1) any trade agreement entered into under section 103 shall be treated as an agreement entered into under section 101 or 102 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2111 or 2112), as appropriate; and

(2) any proclamation or Executive order issued pursuant to a trade agreement entered into under section 103 shall be treated as a proclamation or Executive order issued pursuant to a trade agreement entered into under section 102 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2112).

SEC. 111. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) AGREEMENT ON AGRICULTURE.—The term ''Agreement on Agriculture'' means the agreement referred to in section 101(d)(2) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(2)).

(2) AGREEMENT ON SAFEGUARDS.—The term ''Agreement on Safeguards'' means the agreement referred to in section 101(d)(13) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(13)).

(3) AGREEMENT ON SUBSIDIES AND COUNTERVAILING MEASURES.—The term ''Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures'' means the agreement referred to in section 101(d)(12) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(12)).

(4) ANTIDUMPING AGREEMENT.—The term ''Antidumping Agreement'' means the Agreement on Implementation of Article VI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 referred to in section 101(d)(7) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(7)).

(5) APPELLATE BODY.—The term ''Appellate Body'' means the Appellate Body established under Article 17.1 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding.

(6) COMMON MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''common multilateral environmental agreement'' means any agreement specified in subparagraph (B) or included under subparagraph (C) to which both the United States and one or more other parties to the negotiations are full parties, including any current or future mutually agreed upon protocols, amendments, annexes, or adjustments to such an agreement.

(B) AGREEMENTS SPECIFIED.—The agreements specified in this subparagraph are the following:

(i) The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, done at Washington March 3, 1973 (27 UST 1087; TIAS 8249).

(ii) The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, done at Montreal September 16, 1987.

(iii) The Protocol of 1978 Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, done at London February 17, 1978.

(iv) The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, done at Ramsar February 2, 1971 (TIAS 11084).

(v) The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, done at Canberra May 20, 1980 (33 UST 3476).

(vi) The International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, done at Washington December 2, 1946 (62 Stat. 1716).

(vii) The Convention for the Establishment of an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, done at Washington May 31, 1949 (1 UST 230).

(C) ADDITIONAL AGREEMENTS.—Both the United States and one or more other parties to the negotiations may agree to include any other multilateral environmental or conservation agreement to which they are full parties as a common multilateral environmental agreement under this paragraph.

(7) CORE LABOR STANDARDS.—The term ''core labor standards'' means—

(A) freedom of association;

(B) the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

(C) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor;

(D) the effective abolition of child labor and a prohibition on the worst forms of child labor; and

(E) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

(8) DISPUTE SETTLEMENT UNDERSTANDING.—The term ''Dispute Settlement Understanding'' means the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes referred to in section 101(d)(16) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(16)).

(9) ENABLING CLAUSE.—The term ''Enabling Clause'' means the Decision on Differential and More Favourable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing Countries (L/4903), adopted November 28, 1979, under GATT 1947 (as defined in section 2 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3501)).

(10) ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS.—The term ''environmental laws'', with respect to the laws of the United States, means environmental statutes and regulations enforceable by action of the Federal Government.

(11) GATT 1994.—The term ''GATT 1994'' has the meaning given that term in section 2 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3501).

(12) GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN SERVICES.—The term ''General Agreement on Trade in Services'' means the General Agreement on Trade in Services (referred to in section 101(d)(14) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(14))).

(13) GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT AGREEMENT.—The term ''Government Procurement Agreement'' means the Agreement on Government Procurement referred to in section 101(d)(17) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3511(d)(17)).

(14) ILO.—The term ''ILO'' means the International Labor Organization.

(15) IMPORT SENSITIVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT.—The term ''import sensitive agricultural product'' means an agricultural product—

(A) with respect to which, as a result of the Uruguay Round Agreements, the rate of duty was the subject of tariff reductions by the United States and, pursuant to such Agreements, was reduced on January 1, 1995, to a rate that was not less than 97.5 percent of the rate of duty that applied to such article on December 31, 1994; or

(B) which was subject to a tariff rate quota on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(16) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT.—The term ''Information Technology Agreement'' means the Ministerial Declaration on Trade in Information Technology Products of the World Trade Organization, agreed to at Singapore December 13, 1996.

(17) INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED CORE LABOR STANDARDS.—The term ''internationally recognized core labor standards'' means the core labor standards only as stated in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-Up (1998).

(18) LABOR LAWS.—The term ''labor laws'' means the statutes and regulations, or provisions thereof, of a party to the negotiations that are directly related to core labor standards as well as other labor protections for children and minors and acceptable conditions of work with respect to minimum wages, hours of work, and occupational safety and health, and for the United States, includes Federal statutes and regulations addressing those standards, protections, or conditions, but does not include State or local labor laws.

(19) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term ''United States person'' means—

(A) a United States citizen;

(B) a partnership, corporation, or other legal entity that is organized under the laws of the United States; and

(C) a partnership, corporation, or other legal entity that is organized under the laws of a foreign country and is controlled by entities described in subparagraph (B) or United States citizens, or both.

(20) URUGUAY ROUND AGREEMENTS.—The term ''Uruguay Round Agreements'' has the meaning given that term in section 2(7) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3501(7)).

(21) WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION; WTO.—The terms ''World Trade Organization'' and ''WTO'' mean the organization established pursuant to the WTO Agreement.

(22) WTO AGREEMENT.—The term ''WTO Agreement'' means the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization entered into on April 15, 1994.

(23) WTO MEMBER.—The term ''WTO member'' has the meaning given that term in section 2(10) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 3501(10)).

TITLE II—EXTENSION OF TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

SEC. 202. APPLICATION OF PROVISIONS RELATING TO TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE.

(a) REPEAL OF SNAPBACK.—Section 233 of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Extension Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–40; 125 Stat. 416) is repealed.

(b) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS.—Except as otherwise provided in this title, the provisions of chapters 2 through 6 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on December 31, 2013, and as amended by this title, shall—

(1) take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) apply to petitions for certification filed under chapter 2, 3, or 6 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 on or after such date of enactment.

(c) REFERENCES.—Except as otherwise provided in this title, whenever in this title an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a provision of chapters 2 through 6 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, the reference shall be considered to be made to a provision of any such chapter, as in effect on December 31, 2013.

SEC. 203. EXTENSION OF TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) EXTENSION OF TERMINATION PROVISIONS.—Section 285 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 note) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' each place it appears and inserting ''June 30, 2021''.

(b) TRAINING FUNDS.—Section 236(a)(2)(A) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2296(a)(2)(A)) is amended by striking ''shall not exceed'' and all that follows and inserting ''shall not exceed $450,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2021.''.

(c) REEMPLOYMENT TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE.—Section 246(b)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2318(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''June 30, 2021''.

(d) AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR WORKERS.—Section 245(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2317(a)) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''June 30, 2021''.

(2) TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR FIRMS.—Section 255(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2345(a)) is amended by striking ''fiscal years 2012 and 2013'' and all that follows through ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2015 through 2021''.

(3) TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR FARMERS.—Section 298(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2401g(a)) is amended by striking ''fiscal years 2012 and 2013'' and all that follows through ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2015 through 2021''.

SEC. 204. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING.

(a) PERFORMANCE MEASURES.—Section 239(j) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2311(j)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking ''DATA REPORTING'' and inserting ''PERFORMANCE MEASURES'';

(2) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''a quarterly'' and inserting ''an annual''; and

(ii) by striking ''data'' and inserting ''measures'';

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''core'' and inserting ''primary''; and

(C) in subparagraph (C), by inserting ''that promote efficiency and effectiveness'' after ''assistance program'';

(3) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''CORE INDICATORS DESCRIBED'' and inserting ''INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE''; and

(B) by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

''(A) PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE DESCRIBED.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The primary indicators of performance referred to in paragraph (1)(A) shall consist of—

''(I) the percentage and number of workers who received benefits under the trade adjustment assistance program who are in unsubsidized employment during the second calendar quarter after exit from the program;

''(II) the percentage and number of workers who received benefits under the trade adjustment assistance program and who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth calendar quarter after exit from the program;

''(III) the median earnings of workers described in subclause (I);

''(IV) the percentage and number of workers who received benefits under the trade adjustment assistance program who, subject to clause (ii), obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in the program or within one year after exit from the program; and

''(V) the percentage and number of workers who received benefits under the trade adjustment assistance program who, during a year while receiving such benefits, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable gains in skills toward such a credential or employment.

''(ii) INDICATOR RELATING TO CREDENTIAL.—For purposes of clause (i)(IV), a worker who received benefits under the trade adjustment assistance program who obtained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent shall be included in the percentage counted for purposes of that clause only if the worker, in addition to obtaining such a diploma or its recognized equivalent, has obtained or retained employment or is in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.'';

(4) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''DATA'' and inserting ''MEASURES'';

(B) by striking ''quarterly'' and inserting ''annual''; and

(C) by striking ''data'' and inserting ''measures''; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) ACCESSIBILITY OF STATE PERFORMANCE REPORTS.—The Secretary shall, on an annual basis, make available (including by electronic means), in an easily understandable format, the reports of cooperating States or cooperating State agencies required by paragraph (1) and the information contained in those reports.''.

(b) COLLECTION AND PUBLICATION OF DATA.—Section 249B of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2323) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''enrolled in'' and inserting ''who received'';

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) by striking ''complete'' and inserting ''exited''; and

(II) by striking ''who were enrolled in'' and inserting '', including who received'';

(iii) in subparagraph (E), by striking ''complete'' and inserting ''exited'';

(iv) in subparagraph (F), by striking ''complete'' and inserting ''exit''; and

(v) by adding at the end the following:

''(G) The average cost per worker of receiving training approved under section 236.

''(H) The percentage of workers who received training approved under section 236 and obtained unsubsidized employment in a field related to that training.''; and

(B) in paragraph (4)—

(i) in subparagraphs (A) and (B), by striking ''quarterly'' each place it appears and inserting ''annual''; and

(ii) by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following:

''(C) The median earnings of workers described in section 239(j)(2)(A)(i)(III) during the second calendar quarter after exit from the program, expressed as a percentage of the median earnings of such workers before the calendar quarter in which such workers began receiving benefits under this chapter.''; and

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) and (C) as subparagraphs (C) and (D), respectively; and

(ii) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) the reports required under section 239(j);''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''a quarterly'' and inserting ''an annual''.

(c) RECOGNIZED POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL DEFINED.—Section 247 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2319) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(19) The term 'recognized postsecondary credential' means a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by a State or the Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.''.

SEC. 205. APPLICABILITY OF TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS.

(a) TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR WORKERS.—

(1) PETITIONS FILED ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2014, AND BEFORE DATE OF ENACTMENT.—

(A) CERTIFICATIONS OF WORKERS NOT CERTIFIED BEFORE DATE OF ENACTMENT.—

(i) CRITERIA IF A DETERMINATION HAS NOT BEEN MADE.—If, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor has not made a determination with respect to whether to certify a group of workers as eligible to apply for adjustment assistance under section 222 of the Trade Act of 1974 pursuant to a petition described in clause (iii), the Secretary shall make that determination based on the requirements of section 222 of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on such date of enactment.

(ii) RECONSIDERATION OF DENIALS OF CERTIFICATIONS.—If, before the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary made a determination not to certify a group of workers as eligible to apply for adjustment assistance under section 222 of the Trade Act of 1974 pursuant to a petition described in clause (iii), the Secretary shall—

(I) reconsider that determination; and

(II) if the group of workers meets the requirements of section 222 of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on such date of enactment, certify the group of workers as eligible to apply for adjustment assistance.

(iii) PETITION DESCRIBED.—A petition described in this clause is a petition for a certification of eligibility for a group of workers filed under section 221 of the Trade Act of 1974 on or after January 1, 2014, and before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(B) ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), a worker certified as eligible to apply for adjustment assistance under section 222 of the Trade Act of 1974 pursuant to a petition described in subparagraph (A)(iii) shall be eligible, on and after the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, to receive benefits only under the provisions of chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on such date of enactment.

(ii) COMPUTATION OF MAXIMUM BENEFITS.—Benefits received by a worker described in clause (i) under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 before the date of the enactment of this Act shall be included in any determination of the maximum benefits for which the worker is eligible under the provisions of chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) PETITIONS FILED BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2014.—A worker certified as eligible to apply for adjustment assistance pursuant to a petition filed under section 221 of the Trade Act of 1974 on or before December 31, 2013, shall continue to be eligible to apply for and receive benefits under the provisions of chapter 2 of title II of such Act, as in effect on December 31, 2013.

(3) QUALIFYING SEPARATIONS WITH RESPECT TO PETITIONS FILED WITHIN 90 DAYS OF DATE OF ENACTMENT.—Section 223(b) of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act, shall be applied and administered by substituting ''before January 1, 2014'' for ''more than one year before the date of the petition on which such certification was granted'' for purposes of determining whether a worker is eligible to apply for adjustment assistance pursuant to a petition filed under section 221 of the Trade Act of 1974 on or after the date of the enactment of this Act and on or before the date that is 90 days after such date of enactment.

(b) TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE FOR FIRMS.—

(1) CERTIFICATION OF FIRMS NOT CERTIFIED BEFORE DATE OF ENACTMENT.—

(A) CRITERIA IF A DETERMINATION HAS NOT BEEN MADE.—If, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce has not made a determination with respect to whether to certify a firm as eligible to apply for adjustment assistance under section 251 of the Trade Act of 1974 pursuant to a petition described in subparagraph (C), the Secretary shall make that determination based on the requirements of section 251 of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on such date of enactment.

(B) RECONSIDERATION OF DENIAL OF CERTAIN PETITIONS.—If, before the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary made a determination not to certify a firm as eligible to apply for adjustment assistance under section 251 of the Trade Act of 1974 pursuant to a petition described in subparagraph (C), the Secretary shall—

(i) reconsider that determination; and

(ii) if the firm meets the requirements of section 251 of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on such date of enactment, certify the firm as eligible to apply for adjustment assistance.

(C) PETITION DESCRIBED.—A petition described in this subparagraph is a petition for a certification of eligibility filed by a firm or its representative under section 251 of the Trade Act of 1974 on or after January 1, 2014, and before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) CERTIFICATION OF FIRMS THAT DID NOT SUBMIT PETITIONS BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2014, AND DATE OF ENACTMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce shall certify a firm described in subparagraph (B) as eligible to apply for adjustment assistance under section 251 of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act, if the firm or its representative files a petition for a certification of eligibility under section 251 of the Trade Act of 1974 not later than 90 days after such date of enactment.

(B) FIRM DESCRIBED.—A firm described in this subparagraph is a firm that the Secretary determines would have been certified as eligible to apply for adjustment assistance if—

(i) the firm or its representative had filed a petition for a certification of eligibility under section 251 of the Trade Act of 1974 on a date during the period beginning on January 1, 2014, and ending on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(ii) the provisions of chapter 3 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on such date of enactment, had been in effect on that date during the period described in clause (i).

SEC. 206. SUNSET PROVISIONS.

(a) APPLICATION OF PRIOR LAW.—Subject to subsection (b), beginning on July 1, 2021, the provisions of chapters 2, 3, 5, and 6 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.), as in effect on January 1, 2014, shall be in effect and apply, except that in applying and administering such chapters—

(1) paragraph (1) of section 231(c) of that Act shall be applied and administered as if subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of that paragraph were not in effect;

(2) section 233 of that Act shall be applied and administered—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in paragraph (2), by substituting ''104-week period'' for ''104-week period'' and all that follows through ''130-week period)''; and

(ii) in paragraph (3)—

(I) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by substituting ''65'' for ''52''; and

(II) by substituting ''78-week period'' for ''52-week period'' each place it appears; and

(B) by applying and administering subsection (g) as if it read as follows:

''(g) PAYMENT OF TRADE READJUSTMENT ALLOWANCES TO COMPLETE TRAINING.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, in order to assist an adversely affected worker to complete training approved for the worker under section 236 that leads to the completion of a degree or industry-recognized credential, payments may be made as trade readjustment allowances for not more than 13 weeks within such period of eligibility as the Secretary may prescribe to account for a break in training or for justifiable cause that follows the last week for which the worker is otherwise entitled to a trade readjustment allowance under this chapter if—

''(1) payment of the trade readjustment allowance for not more than 13 weeks is necessary for the worker to complete the training;

''(2) the worker participates in training in each such week; and

''(3) the worker—

''(A) has substantially met the performance benchmarks established as part of the training approved for the worker;

''(B) is expected to continue to make progress toward the completion of the training; and

''(C) will complete the training during that period of eligibility.'';

(3) section 245(a) of that Act shall be applied and administered by substituting ''June 30, 2022'' for ''December 31, 2007'';

(4) section 246(b)(1) of that Act shall be applied and administered by substituting ''June 30, 2022'' for ''the date that is 5 years'' and all that follows through ''State'';

(5) section 256(b) of that Act shall be applied and administered by substituting ''the 1-year period beginning on July 1, 2021'' for ''each of fiscal years 2003 through 2007, and $4,000,000 for the 3-month period beginning on October 1, 2007'';

(6) section 298(a) of that Act shall be applied and administered by substituting ''the 1-year period beginning on July 1, 2021'' for ''each of the fiscal years'' and all that follows through ''October 1, 2007''; and

(7) section 285 of that Act shall be applied and administered—

(A) in subsection (a), by substituting ''June 30, 2022'' for ''December 31, 2007'' each place it appears; and

(B) by applying and administering subsection (b) as if it read as follows:

''(b) OTHER ASSISTANCE.—

''(1) ASSISTANCE FOR FIRMS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), assistance may not be provided under chapter 3 after June 30, 2022.

''(B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), any assistance approved under chapter 3 pursuant to a petition filed under section 251 on or before June 30, 2022, may be provided—

''(i) to the extent funds are available pursuant to such chapter for such purpose; and

''(ii) to the extent the recipient of the assistance is otherwise eligible to receive such assistance.

''(2) FARMERS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), assistance may not be provided under chapter 6 after June 30, 2022.

''(B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), any assistance approved under chapter 6 on or before June 30, 2022, may be provided—

''(i) to the extent funds are available pursuant to such chapter for such purpose; and

''(ii) to the extent the recipient of the assistance is otherwise eligible to receive such assistance.''.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—The provisions of chapters 2, 3, 5, and 6 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act, shall continue to apply on and after July 1, 2021, with respect to—

(1) workers certified as eligible for trade adjustment assistance benefits under chapter 2 of title II of that Act pursuant to petitions filed under section 221 of that Act before July 1, 2021;

(2) firms certified as eligible for technical assistance or grants under chapter 3 of title II of that Act pursuant to petitions filed under section 251 of that Act before July 1, 2021; and

(3) agricultural commodity producers certified as eligible for technical or financial assistance under chapter 6 of title II of that Act pursuant to petitions filed under section 292 of that Act before July 1, 2021.

SEC. 207. EXTENSION AND MODIFICATION OF HEALTH COVERAGE TAX CREDIT.

(a) EXTENSION.—Subparagraph (B) of section 35(b)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''before January 1, 2014'' and inserting ''before January 1, 2020''.

(b) COORDINATION WITH CREDIT FOR COVERAGE UNDER A QUALIFIED HEALTH PLAN.—Subsection (g) of section 35 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (11) as paragraph (13), and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (10) the following new paragraphs:

''(11) ELECTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—This section shall not apply to any taxpayer for any eligible coverage month unless such taxpayer elects the application of this section for such month.

''(B) TIMING AND APPLICABILITY OF ELECTION.—Except as the Secretary may provide—

''(i) an election to have this section apply for any eligible coverage month in a taxable year shall be made not later than the due date (including extensions) for the return of tax for the taxable year, and

''(ii) any election for this section to apply for an eligible coverage month shall apply for all subsequent eligible coverage months in the taxable year and, once made, shall be irrevocable with respect to such months.

''(12) COORDINATION WITH PREMIUM TAX CREDIT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—An eligible coverage month to which the election under paragraph (11) applies shall not be treated as a coverage month (as defined in section 36B(c)(2)) for purposes of section 36B with respect to the taxpayer.

''(B) COORDINATION WITH ADVANCE PAYMENTS OF PREMIUM TAX CREDIT.—In the case of a taxpayer who makes the election under paragraph (11) with respect to any eligible coverage month in a taxable year or on behalf of whom any advance payment is made under section 7527 with respect to any month in such taxable year—

''(i) the tax imposed by this chapter for the taxable year shall be increased by the excess, if any, of—

''(I) the sum of any advance payments made on behalf of the taxpayer under section 1412 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and section 7527 for months during such taxable year, over

''(II) the sum of the credits allowed under this section (determined without regard to paragraph (1)) and section 36B (determined without regard to subsection (f)(1) thereof) for such taxable year, and

''(ii) section 36B(f)(2) shall not apply with respect to such taxpayer for such taxable year, except that if such taxpayer received any advance payments under section 7527 for any month in such taxable year and is later allowed a credit under section 36B for such taxable year, then section 36B(f)(2)(B) shall be applied by substituting the amount determined under clause (i) for the amount determined under section 36B(f)(2)(A).''.

(c) EXTENSION OF ADVANCE PAYMENT PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 7527 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''August 1, 2003'' and inserting ''the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (1) of section 7527(e) of such Code is amended by striking ''occurring'' and all that follows and inserting ''occurring—

''(A) after the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015, and

''(B) prior to the first month for which an advance payment is made on behalf of such individual under subsection (a).''.

(d) INDIVIDUAL INSURANCE TREATED AS QUALIFIED HEALTH INSURANCE WITHOUT REGARD TO ENROLLMENT DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (J) of section 35(e)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''insurance if the eligible individual'' and all that follows through ''For purposes of'' and inserting ''insurance. For purposes of''.

(2) SPECIAL RULE.—Subparagraph (J) of section 35(e)(1) of such Code, as amended by paragraph (1), is amended by striking ''insurance.'' and inserting ''insurance (other than coverage enrolled in through an Exchange established under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act).''.

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (m) of section 6501 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting '', 35(g)(11)'' after ''30D(e)(4)''.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section shall apply to coverage months in taxable years beginning after December 31, 2013.

(2) PLANS AVAILABLE ON INDIVIDUAL MARKET FOR USE OF TAX CREDIT.—The amendment made by subsection (d)(2) shall apply to coverage months in taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

(3) TRANSITION RULE.—Notwithstanding section 35(g)(11)(B)(i) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (as added by this title), an election to apply section 35 of such Code to an eligible coverage month (as defined in section 35(b) of such Code) (and not to claim the credit under section 36B of such Code with respect to such month) in a taxable year beginning after December 31, 2013, and before the date of the enactment of this Act—

(A) may be made at any time on or after such date of enactment and before the expiration of the 3-year period of limitation prescribed in section 6511(a) with respect to such taxable year; and

(B) may be made on an amended return.

(g) AGENCY OUTREACH.—As soon as possible after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretaries of the Treasury, Health and Human Services, and Labor (or such Secretaries' delegates) and the Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (or the Director's delegate) shall carry out programs of public outreach, including on the Internet, to inform potential eligible individuals (as defined in section 35(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) of the extension of the credit under section 35 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the availability of the election to claim such credit retroactively for coverage months beginning after December 31, 2013.

SEC. 208. CUSTOMS USER FEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 13031(j)(3) of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (19 U.S.C. 58c(j)(3)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B)(i), by striking ''September 30, 2024'' and inserting ''September 30, 2025''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) Fees may be charged under paragraphs (9) and (10) of subsection (a) during the period beginning on July 29, 2025, and ending on September 30, 2025.''.

(b) RATE FOR MERCHANDISE PROCESSING FEES.—Section 503 of the United States–Korea Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Public Law 112–41; 125 Stat. 460) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) FURTHER ADDITIONAL PERIOD.—For the period beginning on July 15, 2025, and ending on September 30, 2025, section 13031(a)(9) of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (19 U.S.C. 58c(a)(9)) shall be applied and administered—

''(1) in subparagraph (A), by substituting '0.3464' for '0.21'; and

''(2) in subparagraph (B)(i), by substituting '0.3464' for '0.21'.''.

SEC. 209. CHILD TAX CREDIT NOT REFUNDABLE FOR TAXPAYERS ELECTING TO EXCLUDE FOREIGN EARNED INCOME FROM TAX.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 24(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) EXCEPTION FOR TAXPAYERS EXCLUDING FOREIGN EARNED INCOME.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any taxpayer for any taxable year if such taxpayer elects to exclude any amount from gross income under section 911 for such taxable year.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2014.

SEC. 210. TIME FOR PAYMENT OF CORPORATE ESTIMATED TAXES.

Notwithstanding section 6655 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, in the case of a corporation with assets of not less than $1,000,000,000 (determined as of the end of the preceding taxable year)—

(1) the amount of any required installment of corporate estimated tax which is otherwise due in July, August, or September of 2020 shall be increased by 2.75 percent of such amount (determined without regard to any increase in such amount not contained in such Code); and

(2) the amount of the next required installment after an installment referred to in paragraph (1) shall be appropriately reduced to reflect the amount of the increase by reason of such paragraph.

SEC. 211. COVERAGE AND PAYMENT FOR RENAL DIALYSIS SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH ACUTE KIDNEY INJURY.

(a) COVERAGE.—Section 1861(s)(2)(F) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(s)(2)(F)) is amended by inserting before the semicolon the following: '', including such renal dialysis services furnished on or after January 1, 2017, by a renal dialysis facility or provider of services paid under section 1881(b)(14) to an individual with acute kidney injury (as defined in section 1834(r)(2))''.

(b) PAYMENT.—Section 1834 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(r) PAYMENT FOR RENAL DIALYSIS SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH ACUTE KIDNEY INJURY.—

''(1) PAYMENT RATE.—In the case of renal dialysis services (as defined in subparagraph (B) of section 1881(b)(14)) furnished under this part by a renal dialysis facility or provider of services paid under such section during a year (beginning with 2017) to an individual with acute kidney injury (as defined in paragraph (2)), the amount of payment under this part for such services shall be the base rate for renal dialysis services determined for such year under such section, as adjusted by any applicable geographic adjustment factor applied under subparagraph (D)(iv)(II) of such section and may be adjusted by the Secretary (on a budget neutral basis for payments under this paragraph) by any other adjustment factor under subparagraph (D) of such section.

''(2) INDIVIDUAL WITH ACUTE KIDNEY INJURY DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'individual with acute kidney injury' means an individual who has acute loss of renal function and does not receive renal dialysis services for which payment is made under section 1881(b)(14).''.

SEC. 212. MODIFICATION OF THE MEDICARE SEQUESTER FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024.

Section 251A(6)(D)(ii) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901a(6)(D)(ii)) is amended by striking ''0.0 percent'' and inserting ''0.25 percent''.

MOTION OFFERED BY MR. ROGERS OF KENTUCKY

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the motion.

The text of the motion is as follows:

Mr. Rogers of Kentucky moves that the House concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314 with the amendment printed in part A of House Report 114–315 modified by the amendment printed in part B of that report.

The text of the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the text is as follows:

In lieu of the matter proposed to be inserted by the Senate amendment, insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015''.

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

TITLE I—BUDGET ENFORCEMENT

SEC. 101. AMENDMENTS TO THE BALANCED BUDGET AND EMERGENCY DEFICIT CONTROL ACT OF 1985.

(a) REVISED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING LIMITS.—Section 251(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(c)) is amended by striking paragraphs (3) and (4) and inserting the following:

''(3) for fiscal year 2016—

''(A) for the revised security category, $548,091,000,000 in new budget authority; and

''(B) for the revised nonsecurity category $518,491,000,000 in new budget authority;

''(4) for fiscal year 2017—

''(A) for the revised security category, $551,068,000,000 in new budget authority; and

''(B) for the revised nonsecurity category, $518,531,000,000 in new budget authority;''.

(b) DIRECT SPENDING ADJUSTMENTS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2016 AND 2017.—Section 251A of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901a), is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5)(B), by striking ''paragraph (10)'' and inserting ''paragraphs (10) and (11)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(11) IMPLEMENTING DIRECT SPENDING REDUCTIONS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2016 AND 2017.—(A) OMB shall make the calculations necessary to implement the direct spending reductions calculated pursuant to paragraphs (3) and (4) without regard to the amendment made to section 251(c) revising the discretionary spending limits for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015.

''(B) Paragraph (5)(B) shall not be implemented for fiscal years 2016 and 2017.''.

(c) EXTENSION OF DIRECT SPENDING REDUCTIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025.—Section 251A(6) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901a(6)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''and for fiscal year 2024'' and by inserting ''for fiscal year 2024, and for fiscal year 2025'';

(2) by striking subparagraph (C) and redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (C); and

(3) in subparagraph (C) (as so redesignated), by striking ''fiscal year 2024'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2025''.

(d) OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS AMOUNTS.—In fiscal years 2016 and 2017, the adjustments under section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)) for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism appropriations will be as follows:

(1) For budget function 150—

(A) for fiscal year 2016, $14,895,000,000; and

(B) for fiscal year 2017, $14,895,000,000.

(2) For budget function 050—

(A) for fiscal year 2016, $58,798,000,000; and

(B) for fiscal year 2017, $58,798,000,000.

This subsection shall not affect the applicability of section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

SEC. 102. AUTHORITY FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET RESOLUTION IN THE SENATE.

(a) FISCAL YEAR 2017.—For the purpose of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, after April 15, 2016, and enforcing budgetary points of order in prior concurrent resolutions on the budget, the allocations, aggregates, and levels provided for in subsection (b) shall apply in the Senate in the same manner as for a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2017 with appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2018 through 2026.

(b) COMMITTEE ALLOCATIONS, AGGREGATES, AND LEVELS.—After April 15, 2016, but not later than May 15, 2016, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate shall file—

(1) for the Committee on Appropriations, committee allocations for fiscal year 2017 consistent with discretionary spending limits set forth in section 251(c)(4) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended by this Act, for the purpose of enforcing section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974;

(2) for all committees other than the Committee on Appropriations, committee allocations for fiscal years 2017, 2017 through 2021, and 2017 through 2026 consistent with the most recent baseline of the Congressional Budget Office, as adjusted for the budgetary effects of any provision of law enacted during the period beginning on the date such baseline is issued and ending on the date of submission of such statement, for the purpose of enforcing section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974;

(3) aggregate spending levels for fiscal year 2017 in accordance with the allocations established under paragraphs (1) and (2), for the purpose of enforcing section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974;

(4) aggregate revenue levels for fiscal years 2017, 2017 through 2021, and 2017 through 2026 consistent with the most recent baseline of the Congressional Budget Office, as adjusted for the budgetary effects of any provision of law enacted during the period beginning on the date such baseline is issued and ending on the date of submission of such statement, for the purpose of enforcing section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974; and

(5) levels of Social Security revenues and outlays for fiscal years 2017, 2017 through 2021, and 2017 through 2026 consistent with the most recent baseline of the Congressional Budget Office, as adjusted for the budgetary effects of any provision of law enacted during the period beginning on the date such baseline is issued and ending on the date of submission of such statement, for the purpose of enforcing sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

(c) ADDITIONAL MATTER.—The filing referred to in subsection (b) may also include for fiscal year 2017 the matter contained in subtitles A and B of title IV of S. Con. Res. 11 (114th Congress) updated by 1 fiscal year.

(d) EXPIRATION.—This section shall expire if a concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2017 is agreed to by the Senate and the House of Representatives pursuant to section 301 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

TITLE II—AGRICULTURE

SEC. 201. STANDARD REINSURANCE AGREEMENT.

Section 508(k)(8) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1508(k)(8)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''may renegotiate'' and all that follows through the end of clause (ii) and inserting the following: ''shall renegotiate the financial terms and conditions of each Standard Reinsurance Agreement—

''(i) not later than December 31, 2016; and

''(ii) not less than once during each period of 5 reinsurance years thereafter.''; and

(2) by striking subparagraph (E) and inserting the following:

''(E) CAP ON OVERALL RATE OF RETURN.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (F), the Board shall ensure that the Standard Reinsurance Agreement renegotiated under subparagraph (A)(i) establishes a target rate of return for the approved insurance providers, taken as a whole, that does not exceed 8.9 percent of retained premium for each of the 2017 through 2026 reinsurance years.''.

TITLE III—COMMERCE

SEC. 301. DEBT COLLECTION IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 227(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)(iii), by inserting '', unless such call is made solely to collect a debt owed to or guaranteed by the United States'' after ''charged for the call''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by inserting '', is made solely pursuant to the collection of a debt owed to or guaranteed by the United States,'' after ''purposes''; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (F), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (G), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(H) may restrict or limit the number and duration of calls made to a telephone number assigned to a cellular telephone service to collect a debt owed to or guaranteed by the United States.''.

(b) DEADLINE FOR REGULATIONS.—Not later than 9 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal Communications Commission, in consultation with the Department of the Treasury, shall prescribe regulations to implement the amendments made by this section.

TITLE IV—STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE

SEC. 401. STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE TEST DRAWDOWN AND SALE NOTIFICATION AND DEFINITION CHANGE.

(a) NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—Section 161(g) of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6241(g)) is amended by striking paragraph (8) and inserting the following:

''(8) NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—

''(A) PRIOR NOTICE.—Not less than 14 days before the date on which a test is carried out under this subsection, the Secretary shall notify both Houses of Congress of the test.

''(B) EMERGENCY.—The prior notice requirement in subparagraph (A) shall not apply if the Secretary determines that an emergency exists which requires a test to be carried out, in which case the Secretary shall notify both Houses of Congress of the test as soon as possible.

''(C) DETAILED DESCRIPTION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which a test is completed under this subsection, the Secretary shall submit to both Houses of Congress a detailed description of the test.

''(ii) REPORT.—A detailed description submitted under clause (i) may be included as part of a report made to the President and Congress under section 165.''.

(b) DEFINITION CHANGE.—Section 3(8)(C)(iii) of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6202(8)(C)(iii)) is amended by striking ''sabotage or an act of God'' and inserting ''sabotage, an act of terrorism, or an act of God''.

SEC. 402. STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE MISSION READINESS OPTIMIZATION.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(1) complete a long-range strategic review of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; and

(2) develop and submit to Congress a proposed action plan, including a proposed implementation schedule, that—

(A) specifies near- and long-term roles of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve relative to the energy and economic security goals and objectives of the United States;

(B) describes whether existing legal authorities that govern the policies, configuration, and capabilities of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve are adequate to ensure that the Strategic Petroleum Reserve can meet the current and future energy and economic security goals and objectives of the United States;

(C) identifies the configuration and performance capabilities of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and recommends an action plan to achieve the optimal—

(i) capacity, location, and composition of petroleum products in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; and

(ii) storage and distributional capabilities; and

(D) estimates the resources required to attain and maintain the long-term sustainability and operational effectiveness of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

SEC. 403. STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE DRAWDOWN AND SALE.

(a) DRAWDOWN AND SALE.—Notwithstanding section 161 of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6241), except as provided in subsection (b), the Secretary of Energy shall draw down and sell—

(1) 5,000,000 barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during fiscal year 2018;

(2) 5,000,000 barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during fiscal year 2019;

(3) 5,000,000 barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during fiscal year 2020;

(4) 5,000,000 barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during fiscal year 2021;

(5) 8,000,000 barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during fiscal year 2022;

(6) 10,000,000 barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during fiscal year 2023;

(7) 10,000,000 barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during fiscal year 2024; and

(8) 10,000,000 barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during fiscal year 2025.

(b) EMERGENCY PROTECTION.—The Secretary shall not draw down and sell crude oil under this section in amounts that would limit the authority to sell petroleum products under section 161(h) of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C.6241(h)) in the full amount authorized by that subsection.

(c) PROCEEDS.—Proceeds from a sale under this section shall be deposited into the general fund of the Treasury during the fiscal year in which the sale occurs.

SEC. 404. ENERGY SECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE MODERNIZATION FUND.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established in the Treasury of the United States a fund to be known as the Energy Security and Infrastructure Modernization Fund (referred to in this section as the ''Fund''), consisting of—

(1) collections deposited in the Fund under subsection (c); and

(2) amounts otherwise appropriated to the Fund.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Fund is to provide for the construction, maintenance, repair, and replacement of Strategic Petroleum Reserve facilities.

(c) COLLECTION AND DEPOSIT OF SALE PROCEEDS IN FUND.—

(1) DRAWDOWN AND SALE.—Notwithstanding section 161 of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6241), to the extent provided in advance in appropriation Acts, the Secretary of Energy shall draw down and sell crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in amounts as authorized under subsection (e), except as provided in paragraph (2). Amounts received for a sale under this paragraph shall be deposited into the Fund during the fiscal year in which the sale occurs. Such amounts shall remain available in the Fund without fiscal year limitation.

(2) EMERGENCY PROTECTION.—The Secretary shall not draw down and sell crude oil under this subsection in amounts that would limit the authority to sell petroleum products under section 161(h) of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C.6241(h)) in the full amount authorized by that subsection.

(d) AUTHORIZED USES OF FUND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Amounts in the Fund may be used for, or may be credited as offsetting collections for amounts used for, carrying out the program described in paragraph (2)(B), to the extent provided in advance in appropriation Acts.

(2) PROGRAM TO MODERNIZE THE STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE.—

(A) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(i) The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is one of the Nation's most valuable energy security assets.

(ii) The age and condition of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve have diminished its value as a Federal energy security asset.

(iii) Global oil markets and the location and amount of United States oil production and refining capacity have dramatically changed in the 40 years since the establishment of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

(iv) Maximizing the energy security value of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve requires a modernized infrastructure that meets the drawdown and distribution needs of changed domestic and international oil and refining market conditions.

(B) PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Energy shall establish a Strategic Petroleum Reserve modernization program to protect the United States economy from the impacts of emergency product supply disruptions. The program may include—

(i) operational improvements to extend the useful life of surface and subsurface infrastructure;

(ii) maintenance of cavern storage integrity; and

(iii) addition of infrastructure and facilities to optimize the drawdown and incremental distribution capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated (and drawdowns and sales under subsection (c) in an equal amount are authorized) for carrying out subsection (d)(2)(B), $2,000,000,000 for the

period encompassing fiscal years 2017 through 2020.

(f) TRANSMISSION OF DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUESTS.—The Secretary of Energy shall prepare and submit in the Department's annual budget request to Congress—

(1) an itemization of the amounts of funds necessary to carry out subsection (d); and

(2) a designation of any activities thereunder for which a multiyear budget authority would be appropriate.

(g) SUNSET.—The authority of the Secretary to draw down and sell crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve under this section shall expire at the end of fiscal year 2020.

TITLE V—PENSIONS

SEC. 501. SINGLE EMPLOYER PLAN ANNUAL PREMIUM RATES.

(a) FLAT-RATE PREMIUM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 4006(a)(3)(A)(i) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1306(a)(3)(A)(i)) is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of subclause (IV), by striking the period at the end of subclause (V) and inserting a semicolon, and by inserting after subclause (V) the following:

''(VI) for plan years beginning after December 31, 2016, and before January 1, 2018, $69;

''(VII) for plan years beginning after December 31, 2017, and before January 1, 2019, $74; and

''(VIII) for plan years beginning after December 31, 2018, $80.''.

(2) PREMIUM RATES AFTER 2019.—Section 4006(a)(3)(G) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 1306(a)(3)(G)) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''2016'' and inserting ''2019''; and

(B) in clause (i)(II) by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2017''.

(b) VARIABLE-RATE PREMIUM INCREASES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 4006(a)(8)(C) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 1306(a)(8)(C)) is amended—

(A) in the subparagraph heading, by striking ''increase in 2014 and 2015'' and inserting ''increases'';

(B) in clause (ii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(C) in clause (iii), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(iv) in the case of plan years beginning in calendar year 2017, by $3;

''(v) in the case of plan years beginning in calendar year 2018, by $4; and

''(vi) in the case of plan years beginning in calendar year 2019, by $4.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 4006(a)(8) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 1306(a)(8)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in clause (iv), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(v) for plan years beginning after calendar year 2017, the amount in effect for plan years beginning in 2017 (determined after application of subparagraph (C));

''(vi) for plan years beginning after calendar year 2018, the amount in effect for plan years beginning in 2018 (determined after application of subparagraph (C)); and

''(vii) for plan years beginning after calendar year 2019, the amount in effect for plan years beginning in 2019 (determined after application of subparagraph (C)).''; and

(B) in subparagraph (D)—

(i) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in clause (iv), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(v) 2015, in the case of plan years beginning after calendar year 2017;

''(vi) 2016, in the case of plan years beginning after calendar year 2018; and

''(vii) 2017, in the case of plan years beginning after calendar year 2019.''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.— The amendments made by this section shall apply to plan years beginning after December 31, 2016.

SEC. 502. PENSION PAYMENT ACCELERATION.

Notwithstanding section 4007(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1307(a)) and section 4007.11 of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, for plan years commencing after December 31, 2024, and before January 1, 2026, the premium due date for such plan years shall be the fifteenth day of the ninth calendar month that begins on or after the first day of the premium payment year.

SEC. 503. MORTALITY TABLES.

(a) CREDIBILITY.—For purposes of subclause (I) of section 430(h)(3)(C)(iii) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and subclause (I) of section 303(h)(3)(C)(iii) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, the determination of whether plans have credible information shall be made in accordance with established actuarial credibility theory, which—

(1) is materially different from rules under such section of such Code, including Revenue Procedure 2007-37, that are in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(2) permits the use of tables that reflect adjustments to the tables described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 430(h)(3) of such Code, and subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 303(h)(3) of such Act, if such adjustments are based on the experience described in subclause (II) of section 430(h)(3)(C)(iii) of such Code and in subclause (II) of section 303(h)(3)(C)(iii) of such Act.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall apply to plan years beginning after December 31, 2015.

SEC. 504. EXTENSION OF CURRENT FUNDING STABILIZATION PERCENTAGES TO 2018, 2019 AND 2020.

(a) FUNDING STABILIZATION UNDER THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986.—The table in subclause (II) of section 430(h)(2)(C)(iv) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''If the calendar year is:	The applicable minimum percentage is:	The applicable maximum percentage is:
2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, or 2020.	90%	110%
2021	85%	115%
2022	80%	120%
2023	75%	125%
After 2023	70%	130%''.

(b) FUNDING STABILIZATION UNDER EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY ACT OF 1974.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The table in subclause (II) of section 303(h)(2)(C)(iv) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1083(h)(2)(C)(iv)) is amended to read as follows:

''If the calendar year is:	The applicable minimum percentage is:	The applicable maximum percentage is:
2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, or 2020.	90%	110%
2021	85%	115%
2022	80%	120%
2023	75%	125%
After 2023	70%	130%''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Section 101(f)(2)(D) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 1021(f)(2)(D)) is amended—

(i) in clause (i) by striking ''and the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014'' both places it appears and inserting '', the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014, and the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015'', 'and

(ii) in clause (ii) by striking ''2020'' and inserting ''2023''.

(B) STATEMENTS.—The Secretary of Labor shall modify the statements required under subclauses (I) and (II) of section 101(f)(2)(D)(i) of such Act to conform to the amendments made by this section.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to plan years beginning after December 31, 2015.

TITLE VI—HEALTH CARE

SEC. 601. MAINTAINING 2016 MEDICARE PART B PREMIUM AND DEDUCTIBLE LEVELS CONSISTENT WITH ACTUARIALLY FAIR RATES.

(a) 2016 PREMIUM AND DEDUCTIBLE AND REPAYMENT THROUGH FUTURE PREMIUMS.—Section 1839(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395r(a)) is amended—

(1) in the second sentence of paragraph (1), by striking ''Such'' and inserting ''Subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), such''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(5)(A) In applying this part (including subsection (i) and section 1833(b)), the monthly actuarial rate for enrollees age 65 and over for 2016 shall be determined as if subsection (f) did not apply.

''(B) Subsection (f) shall continue to be applied to paragraph (6)(A) (during a repayment month, as described in paragraph (6)(B)) and without regard to the application of subparagraph (A).

''(6)(A) With respect to a repayment month (as described in subparagraph (B)), the monthly premium otherwise established under paragraph (3) shall be increased by, subject to subparagraph (D), $3.

''(B) For purposes of this paragraph, a repayment month is a month during a year, beginning with 2016, for which a balance due amount is computed under subparagraph (C) as greater than zero.

''(C) For purposes of this paragraph, the balance due amount computed under this subparagraph, with respect to a month, is the amount estimated by the Chief Actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to be equal to—

''(i) the amount transferred under section 1844(d)(1); plus

''(ii) the amount that is equal to the aggregate reduction, for all individuals enrolled under this part, in the income related monthly adjustment amount as a result of the application of paragraph (5); minus

''(iii) the amounts payable under this part as a result of the application of this paragraph for preceding months.

''(D) If the balance due amount computed under subparagraph (C), without regard to this subparagraph, for December of a year would be less than zero, the Chief Actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services shall estimate, and the Secretary shall apply, a reduction to the dollar amount increase applied under subparagraph (A) for each month during such year in a manner such that the balance due amount for January of the subsequent year is equal to zero.''.

(b) TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION.—Section 1844 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following:

''In applying paragraph (1), the amounts transferred under subsection (d)(1) with respect to enrollees described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of such subsection shall be treated as premiums payable and deposited in the Trust Fund under subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively, of paragraph (1).''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(d)(1) For 2016, there shall be transferred from the General Fund to the Trust Fund an amount, as estimated by the Chief Actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, equal to the reduction in aggregate premiums payable under this part for a month in such year (excluding any changes in amounts collected under section 1839(i)) that is attributable to the application of section 1839(a)(5)(A) with respect to—

''(A) enrollees age 65 and over; and

''(B) enrollees under age 65.

Such amounts shall be transferred from time to time as appropriate.

''(2) Premium increases affected under section 1839(a)(6) shall not be taken into account in applying subsection (a).

''(3) There shall be transferred from the Trust Fund to the General Fund of the Treasury amounts equivalent to the additional premiums payable as a result of the application of section 1839(a)(6), excluding the aggregate payments attributable to the application of section 1839(i)(3)(A)(ii)(II).''.

(c) CONFORMING APPLICATION OF HIGH INCOME ADJUSTMENTS TO INCREASED MONTHLY PREMIUM IN SAME MANNER AS FOR REGULAR MEDICARE PREMIUMS.—Section 1839(i)(3)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395r(i)(3)(A)(ii)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''AMOUNT.–200 percent'' and inserting the following: ''AMOUNT.–

''(I) 200 percent''; and

(2) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; plus''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subclause:

''(II) 4 times the amount of the increase in the monthly premium under subsection (a)(6) for a month in the year.''.

(d) CONDITIONAL APPLICATION TO 2017 IF NO SOCIAL SECURITY COLA FOR 2017.—If there is no increase in the monthly insurance benefits payable under title II with respect to December 2016 pursuant to section 215(i), then the amendments made by this section shall be applied as if—

(1) the reference to ''2016'' in paragraph (5)(A) of section 1839(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395r(a)), as added by subsection (a)(2), was a reference to ''2016 and 2017'';

(2) the reference to ''a month during a year, beginning with 2016'' in paragraph (6)(B) of section 1839 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395r(a)), as added by subsection (a)(2), was a reference to ''a month in a year, beginning with 2016 and beginning with 2017, respectively''; and

(3) the reference to ''2016'' in subsection (d)(1) of section 1844 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w), as added by subsection (b)(2), was a reference to ''each of 2016 and 2017''.

Any increase in premiums effected under this subsection shall be in addition to the increase effected by the amendments made by subsection (a).

(e) CONSTRUCTION REGARDING NO AUTHORITY TO INITIATE APPLICATION TO YEARS AFTER 2017.—Nothing in subsection (d) or the amendments made by this section shall be construed as authorizing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to initiate application of such subsection or amendments for a year after 2017.

SEC. 602. APPLYING THE MEDICAID ADDITIONAL REBATE REQUIREMENT TO GENERIC DRUGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1927(c)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–8(c)(3)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''The amount'' and inserting ''Except as provided in subparagraph (C), the amount''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) ADDITIONAL REBATE.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The amount of the rebate specified in this paragraph for a rebate period, with respect to each dosage form and strength of a covered outpatient drug other than a single source drug or an innovator multiple source drug of a manufacturer, shall be increased in the manner that the rebate for a dosage form and strength of a single source drug or an innovator multiple source drug is increased under subparagraphs (A) and (D) of paragraph (2), except as provided in clause (ii).

''(ii) SPECIAL RULES FOR APPLICATION OF PROVISION.—In applying subparagraphs (A) and (D) of paragraph (2) under clause (i)—

''(I) the reference in subparagraph (A)(i) of such paragraph to '1990' shall be deemed a reference to '2014';

''(II) subject to clause (iii), the reference in subparagraph (A)(ii) of such paragraph to 'the calendar quarter beginning July 1, 1990' shall be deemed a reference to 'the calendar quarter beginning July 1, 2014'; and

''(III) subject to clause (iii), the reference in subparagraph (A)(ii) of such paragraph to 'September 1990' shall be deemed a reference to 'September 2014';

''(IV) the references in subparagraph (D) of such paragraph to 'paragraph (1)(A)(ii)', 'this paragraph', and 'December 31, 2009' shall be deemed references to 'subparagraph (A)', 'this subparagraph', and 'December 31, 2014', respectively; and

''(V) any reference in such paragraph to a 'single source drug or an innovator multiple source drug' shall be deemed to be a reference to a drug to which clause (i) applies.

''(iii) SPECIAL RULE FOR CERTAIN NONINNOVATOR MULTIPLE SOURCE DRUGS.—In applying paragraph (2)(A)(ii)(II) under clause (i) with respect to a covered outpatient drug that is first marketed as a drug other than a single source drug or an innovator multiple source drug after April 1, 2013, such paragraph shall be applied—

''(I) by substituting 'the applicable quarter' for 'the calendar quarter beginning July 1, 1990'; and

''(II) by substituting 'the last month in such applicable quarter' for 'September 1990'.

''(iv) APPLICABLE QUARTER DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'applicable quarter' means, with respect to a drug described in clause (iii), the fifth full calendar quarter after which the drug is marketed as a drug other than a single source drug or an innovator multiple source drug.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to rebate periods beginning after the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 603. TREATMENT OF OFF-CAMPUS OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENTS OF A PROVIDER.

Section 1833(t) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(t)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B)—

(A) in clause (iii), by striking ''but'' at the end;

(B) in clause (iv), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(v) does not include applicable items and services (as defined in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (21)) that are furnished on or after January 1, 2017, by an off-campus outpatient department of a provider (as defined in subparagraph (B) of such paragraph).''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(21) SERVICES FURNISHED BY AN OFF-CAMPUS OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT OF A PROVIDER.—

''(A) APPLICABLE ITEMS AND SERVICES.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(B)(v) and this paragraph, the term 'applicable items and services' means items and services other than items emergency department (as defined in section 489.24(b) of title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations).

''(B) OFF-CAMPUS OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT OF A PROVIDER.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(B)(v) and this paragraph, subject to clause (ii), the term 'off-campus outpatient department of a provider' means a department of a provider (as defined in section 413.65(a)(2) of title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect as of the date of the enactment of this paragraph) that is not located—

''(I) on the campus (as defined in such section 413.65(a)(2)) of such provider; or

''(II) within the distance (described in such definition of campus) from a remote location of a hospital facility (as defined in such section 413.65(a)(2)).

''(ii) EXCEPTION.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(B)(v) and this paragraph, the term 'off-campus outpatient department of a provider' shall not include a department of a provider (as so defined) that was billing under this subsection with respect to covered OPD services furnished prior to the date of the enactment of this paragraph.

''(C) AVAILABILITY OF PAYMENT UNDER OTHER PAYMENT SYSTEMS.—Payments for applicable items and services furnished by an off-campus outpatient department of a provider that are described in paragraph (1)(B)(v) shall be made under the applicable payment system under this part (other than under this subsection) if the requirements for such payment are otherwise met.

''(D) INFORMATION NEEDED FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—Each hospital shall provide to the Secretary such information as the Secretary determines appropriate to implement this paragraph and paragraph (1)(B)(v) (which may include reporting of information on a hospital claim using a code or modifier and reporting information about off-campus outpatient departments of a provider on the enrollment form described in section 1866(j)).

''(E) LIMITATIONS.—There shall be no administrative or judicial review under section 1869, section 1878, or otherwise of the following:

''(i) The determination of the applicable items and services under subparagraph (A) and applicable payment systems under subparagraph (C).

''(ii) The determination of whether a department of a provider meets the term described in subparagraph (B).

''(iii) Any information that hospitals are required to report pursuant to subparagraph (D).''.

SEC. 604. REPEAL OF AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENT.

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 201 et seq.) is amended by repealing section 18A (as added by section 1511 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148)).

TITLE VII—JUDICIARY

SEC. 701. CIVIL MONETARY PENALTY INFLATION ADJUSTMENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015''.

(b) AMENDMENTS.—The Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990 (28 U.S.C. 2461 note) is amended—

(1) in section 4—

(A) by striking the matter preceding paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than July 1, 2016, and not later than January 15 of every year thereafter, and subject to subsections (c) and (d), the head of each agency shall—'';

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''by regulation adjust'' and inserting ''in accordance with subsection (b), adjust''; and

(ii) by striking '', the Tariff Act of 1930, the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, or the Social Security Act'' and inserting '' or the Tariff Act of 1930'';

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking ''such regulation'' and inserting ''such adjustment''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) PROCEDURES FOR ADJUSTMENTS.—

''(1) CATCH UP ADJUSTMENT.—For the first adjustment made under subsection (a) after the date of enactment of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015—

''(A) the head of an agency shall adjust civil monetary penalties through an interim final rulemaking; and

''(B) the adjustment shall take effect not later than August 1, 2016.

''(2) SUBSEQUENT ADJUSTMENTS.—For the second adjustment made under subsection (a) after the date of enactment of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015, and each adjustment thereafter, the head of an agency shall adjust civil monetary penalties and shall make the adjustment notwithstanding section 553 of title 5, United States Code.

''(c) EXCEPTION.—For the first adjustment made under subsection (a) after the date of enactment of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015, the head of an agency may adjust the amount of a civil monetary penalty by less than the otherwise required amount if—

''(1) the head of the agency, after publishing a notice of proposed rulemaking and providing an opportunity for comment, determines in a final rule that—

''(A) increasing the civil monetary penalty by the otherwise required amount will have a negative economic impact; or

''(B) the social costs of increasing the civil monetary penalty by the otherwise required amount outweigh the benefits; and

''(2) the Director of the Office of Management and Budget concurs with the determination of the head of the agency under paragraph (1).

''(d) OTHER ADJUSTMENTS MADE.—If a civil monetary penalty subject to a cost-of-living adjustment under this Act is, during the 12 months preceding a required cost-of-living adjustment, increased by an amount greater than the amount of the adjustment required under subsection (a), the head of the agency is not required to make the cost-of-living adjustment for that civil monetary penalty in that year.'';

(2) in section 5—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''to the nearest—'' and all that follows through the end of subsection (a) and inserting ''to the nearest multiple of $1.''; and

(B) by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

''(b) DEFINITION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), for purposes of subsection (a), the term 'cost-of-living adjustment' means the percentage (if any) for each civil monetary penalty by which—

''(A) the Consumer Price Index for the month of October preceding the date of the adjustment, exceeds

''(B) the Consumer Price Index for the month of October 1 year before the month of October referred to in subparagraph (A).

''(2) INITIAL ADJUSTMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (C), for the first inflation adjustment under section 4 made by an agency after the date of enactment of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015, the term 'cost-of-living adjustment' means the percentage (if any) for each civil monetary penalty by which the Consumer Price Index for the month of October, 2015 exceeds the Consumer Price Index for the month of October of the calendar year during which the amount of such civil monetary penalty was established or adjusted under a provision of law other than this Act.

''(B) APPLICATION OF ADJUSTMENT.—The cost-of-living adjustment described in subparagraph (A) shall be applied to the amount of the civil monetary penalty as it was most recently established or adjusted under a provision of law other than this Act.

''(C) MAXIMUM ADJUSTMENT.—The amount of the increase in a civil monetary penalty under subparagraph (A) shall not exceed 150 percent of the amount of that civil monetary penalty on the date of enactment of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015.'';

(3) in section 6, by striking ''violations which occur'' and inserting ''civil monetary penalties, including those whose associated violation predated such increase, which are assessed''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 7. IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT ENHANCEMENTS.

''(a) OMB GUIDANCE.—Not later than February 29, 2016, not later than December 15, 2016, and December 15 of every year thereafter, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall issue guidance to agencies on implementing the inflation adjustments required under this Act.

''(b) AGENCY FINANCIAL REPORTS.—The head of each agency shall include in the Agency Financial Report submitted under OMB Circular A–136, or any successor thereto, information about the civil monetary penalties within the jurisdiction of the agency, including the adjustment of the civil monetary penalties by the head of the agency under this Act.

''(c) GAO REVIEW.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall annually submit to Congress a report assessing the compliance of agencies with the inflation adjustments required under this Act, which may be included as part of another report submitted to Congress.''.

(c) REPEAL.—Section 31001(s) of the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (28 U.S.C. 2461 note) is amended by striking paragraph (2).

SEC. 702. CRIME VICTIMS FUND.

There is hereby rescinded and permanently canceled $1,500,000,000 of the funds deposited or available in the Crime Victims Fund created by section 1402 of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10601).

SEC. 703. ASSETS FORFEITURE FUND.

Of the amounts deposited in the Department of Justice Assets Forfeiture Fund, $746,000,000 are hereby rescinded and permanently cancelled.

TITLE VIII—SOCIAL SECURITY

SEC. 801. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Social Security Benefit Protection and Opportunity Enhancement Act of 2015''.

Subtitle A—Ensuring Correct Payments and Reducing Fraud

SEC. 811. EXPANSION OF COOPERATIVE DISABILITY INVESTIGATIONS UNITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than October 1, 2022, the Commissioner of Social Security shall take any necessary actions, subject to the availability of appropriations, to ensure that cooperative disability investigations units have been established, in areas where there is cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, that would cover each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and annually thereafter until the earlier of 2022 or the date on which nationwide coverage is achieved, the Commissioner of Social Security shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report describing a plan to implement the nationwide coverage described in subsection (a) and outlining areas where the Social Security Administration did not receive the cooperation of local law enforcement agencies.

SEC. 812. EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN MEDICAL SOURCES OF EVIDENCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 223(d)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 423(d)(5)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C)(i) In making any determination with respect to whether an individual is under a disability or continues to be under a disability, the Commissioner of Social Security may not consider (except for good cause as determined by the Commissioner) any evidence furnished by—

''(I) any individual or entity who has been convicted of a felony under section 208 or under section 1632;

''(II) any individual or entity who has been excluded from participation in any Federal health care program under section 1128; or

''(III) any person with respect to whom a civil money penalty or assessment has been imposed under section 1129 for the submission of false evidence.

''(ii) To the extent and at such times as is necessary for the effective implementation of clause (i) of this subparagraph—

''(I) the Inspector General of the Social Security Administration shall transmit to the Commissioner information relating to persons described in subclause (I) or (III) of clause (i);

''(II) the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall transmit to the Commissioner information relating to persons described in subclause (II) of clause (i); and''.

(b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commissioner of Social Security shall issue regulations to carry out the amendment made by subsection (a).

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to determinations of disability made on or after the earlier of—

(1) the effective date of the regulations issued by the Commissioner under subsection (b); or

(2) one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 813. NEW AND STRONGER PENALTIES.

(a) CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD.—

(1) AMENDMENT TO TITLE II.—Section 208(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 408(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (7)(C), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(B) in paragraph (8), by adding ''or'' at the end; and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (8) the following:

''(9) conspires to commit any offense described in any of paragraphs (1) through (4),''.

(2) AMENDMENT TO TITLE VIII.—Section 811(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1011(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking the comma and adding ''; or'' at the end; and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) conspires to commit any offense described in any of paragraphs (1) through (3),''.

(3) AMENDMENT TO TITLE XVI.—Section 1632(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1383a(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(B) in paragraph (4), by adding ''or'' at the end; and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) conspires to commit any offense described in any of paragraphs (1) through (3),''.

(b) INCREASED CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS VIOLATING POSITIONS OF TRUST.—

(1) AMENDMENT TO TITLE II.—Section 208(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 408(a)), as amended by subsection (a), is further amended by striking the period at the end and inserting '', except that in the case of a person who receives a fee or other income for services performed in connection with any determination with respect to benefits under this title (including a claimant representative, translator, or current or former employee of the Social Security Administration), or who is a physician or other health care provider who submits, or causes the submission of, medical or other evidence in connection with any such determination, such person shall be guilty of a felony and upon conviction thereof shall be fined under title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned for not more than ten years, or both.''.

(2) AMENDMENT TO TITLE VIII.—Section 811(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1011(a)), as amended by subsection (a), is further amended by striking the period at the end and inserting '', except that in the case of a person who receives a fee or other income for services performed in connection with any determination with respect to benefits under this title (including a claimant representative, translator, or current or former employee of the Social Security Administration), or who is a physician or other health care provider who submits, or causes the submission of, medical or other evidence in connection with any such determination, such person shall be guilty of a felony and upon conviction thereof shall be fined under title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned for not more than ten years, or both.''.

(3) AMENDMENT TO TITLE XVI.—Section 1632(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1383a(a)), as amended by subsection (a), is further amended by striking the period at the end and inserting '', except that in the case of a person who receives a fee or other income for services performed in connection with any determination with respect to benefits under this title (including a claimant representative, translator, or current or former employee of the Social Security Administration), or who is a physician or other health care provider who submits, or causes the submission of, medical or other evidence in connection with any such determination, such person shall be guilty of a felony and upon conviction thereof shall be fined under title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned for not more than ten years, or both.''.

(c) INCREASED CIVIL MONETARY PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS VIOLATING POSITIONS OF TRUST.—Section 1129(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a-8(a)(1)) is amended, in the matter following subparagraph (C), by inserting after ''withholding disclosure of such fact'' the following: '', except that in the case of such a person who receives a fee or other income for services performed in connection with any such determination (including a claimant representative, translator, or current or former employee of the Social Security Administration) or who is a physician or other health care provider who submits, or causes the submission of, medical or other evidence in connection with any such determination, the amount of such penalty shall be not more than $7,500''.

(d) NO BENEFITS PAYABLE TO INDIVIDUALS FOR WHOM A CIVIL MONETARY PENALTY IS IMPOSED FOR FRAUDULENTLY CONCEALING WORK ACTIVITY.—Section 222(c)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 422(c)(5)) is amended by inserting after ''conviction by a Federal court'' the following: '', or the imposition of a civil monetary penalty under section 1129,''.

SEC. 814. REFERENCES TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE IN ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1140(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b-10(a)(1)) is amended by inserting ''(including any Internet or other electronic communication)'' after ''or other communication''.

(b) EACH COMMUNICATION TREATED AS SEPARATE VIOLATION.—Section 1140(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b-10(b)) is amended by inserting after the second sentence the following: ''In the case of any items referred to in subsection (a)(1) consisting of Internet or other electronic communications, each dissemination, viewing, or accessing of such a communication which contains one or more words, letters, symbols, or emblems in violation of subsection (a) shall represent a separate violation''.

SEC. 815. CHANGE TO CAP ADJUSTMENT AUTHORITY.

Section 251(b)(2)(B) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i)—

(A) in the matter before subclause (I), by striking ''and for the cost associated with conducting redeterminations of eligibility under title XVI of the Social Security Act'' and inserting '', for the cost associated with conducting redeterminations of eligibility under title XVI of the Social Security Act, for the cost of co-operative disability investigation units, and for the cost associated with the prosecution of fraud in the programs and operations of the Social Security Administration by Special Assistant United States Attorneys'';

(B) in subclause (VI), by striking ''$1,309,000,000' '''' and inserting ''$1,546,000,000'';

(C) in subclause (VII), by striking ''$1,309,000,000'' and inserting ''$1,462,000,000'';

(D) in subclause (VIII), by striking ''$1,309,000,000'' and inserting ''$1,410,000,000''; and

(E) in subclause (X), by striking ''$1,309,000,000'' and inserting ''$1,302,000,000'';

(2) in clause (ii)(I), by inserting '', including work-related continuing disability reviews to determine whether earnings derived from services demonstrate an individual's ability to engage in substantial gainful activity'' before the semicolon; and

(3) in clause (ii)(III), by striking ''and redeterminations'' and inserting '', redeterminations, co-operative disability investigation units, and fraud prosecutions''.

Subtitle B—Promoting Opportunity for Disability Beneficiaries

SEC. 821. TEMPORARY REAUTHORIZATION OF DISABILITY INSURANCE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT AUTHORITY.

(a) TERMINATION DATE.—Section 234(d)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 434(d)(2)) is amended by striking ''December 18, 2005'' and inserting ''December 31, 2021, and the authority to carry out such projects shall terminate on December 31, 2022''.

(b) AUTHORITY TO WAIVE COMPLIANCE WITH BENEFITS REQUIREMENTS.—Section 234(c) of such Act is amended by striking ''December 17, 2005'' and inserting ''December 30, 2021''.

SEC. 822. MODIFICATION OF DEMONSTRATION PROJECT AUTHORITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 234(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 434(a)(1)) is amended in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by inserting ''to promote attachment to the labor force and'' after ''designed''.

(b) CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW PERIOD.—Section 234(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 434(c)), as amended by section 821(b) of this Act, is further amended by inserting ''including the objectives of the experiment or demonstration project, the expected annual and total costs, and the dates on which the experiment or demonstration project is expected to start and finish,'' after ''thereof,''

(c) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—Section 234 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 434), as amended by subsection (b), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—In developing and carrying out any experiment or demonstration project under this section, the Commissioner may not require any individual to participate in such experiment or demonstration project and shall ensure—

''(1) that the voluntary participation of individuals in such experiment or demonstration project is obtained through informed written consent which satisfies the requirements for informed consent established by the Commissioner for use in such experiment or demonstration project in which human subjects are at risk;

''(2) that any individual's voluntary agreement to participate in any such experiment or demonstration project may be revoked by such individual at any time; and

''(3) that such experiment or demonstration project is expected to yield statistically significant results.''.

(d) ANNUAL REPORTING DEADLINE.—Section 234(d)(1) of such Act is amended by striking ''June 9'' and inserting ''September 30''.

SEC. 823. PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.

Section 234 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 434), as amended by section 822 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(f) PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner shall carry out a demonstration project under this subsection as described in paragraph (2) during a 5-year period beginning not later than January 1, 2017.

''(2) BENEFIT OFFSET.—Under the demonstration project described in this paragraph, with respect to any individual participating in the project who is otherwise entitled to a benefit under section 223(a)(1) for a month—

''(A) any such benefit otherwise payable to the individual for such month (other than a benefit payable for any month prior to the 1st month beginning after the date on which the individual's entitlement to such benefit is determined) shall be reduced by $1 for each $2 by which the individual's earnings derived from services paid during such month exceeds an amount equal to the individual's impairment-related work expenses for such month (as determined under paragraph (3)), except that such benefit may not be reduced below $0;

''(B) no benefit shall be payable under section 202 on the basis of the wages and self-employment income of the individual for any month for which the benefit of such individual under section 223(a)(1) is reduced to $0 pursuant to subparagraph (A);

''(C) entitlement to any benefit described in subparagraph (A) or (B) shall not terminate due to earnings derived from services except following the first month for which such benefit has been reduced to $0 pursuant to subparagraph (A) (and the trial work period (as defined in section 222(c)) and extended period of eligibility shall not apply to any such individual for any such month); and

''(D) in any case in which such an individual is entitled to hospital insurance benefits under part A of title XVIII by reason of section 226(b) and such individual's entitlement to a benefit described in subparagraph (A) or (B) or status as a qualified railroad retirement beneficiary is terminated pursuant to subparagraph (C), such individual shall be deemed to be entitled to such benefits or to occupy such status (notwithstanding the termination of such entitlement or status) for the period of consecutive months throughout all of which the physical or mental impairment, on which such entitlement or status was based, continues, and throughout all of which such individual would have been entitled to monthly insurance benefits under title II or as a qualified railroad retirement beneficiary had such termination of entitlement or status not occurred, but not in excess of 93 such months.

''(3) IMPAIRMENT-RELATED WORK EXPENSES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of paragraph (2)(A) and except as provided in subparagraph (C), the amount of an individual's impairment-related work expenses for a month is deemed to be the minimum threshold amount.

''(B) MINIMUM THRESHOLD AMOUNT.—In this paragraph, the term 'minimum threshold amount' means an amount, to be determined by the Commissioner, which shall not exceed the amount sufficient to demonstrate that an individual has rendered services in a month, as determined by the Commissioner under section 222(c)(4)(A). The Commissioner may test multiple minimum threshold amounts.

''(C) EXCEPTION FOR ITEMIZED IMPAIRMENT-RELATED WORK EXPENSES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), in any case in which the amount of such an individual's itemized impairment-related work expenses (as defined in clause (ii)) for a month is greater than the minimum threshold amount, the amount of the individual's impairment-related work expenses for the month shall be equal to the amount of the individual's itemized impairment-related work expenses (as so defined) for the month.

''(ii) DEFINITION.—In this subparagraph, the term 'itemized impairment-related work expenses' means the amount excluded under section 223(d)(4)(A) from an individual's earnings for a month in determining whether an individual is able to engage in substantial gainful activity by reason of such earnings in such month, except that such amount does not include the cost to the individual of any item or service for which the individual does not provide to the Commissioner a satisfactory itemized accounting.

''(D) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding the other provisions of this paragraph, for purposes of paragraph (2)(A), the amount of an individual's impairment-related work expenses for a month shall not exceed the amount of earnings derived from services, prescribed by the Commissioner under regulations issued pursuant to section 223(d)(4)(A), sufficient to demonstrate an individual's ability to engage in substantial gainful activity.''.

SEC. 824. USE OF ELECTRONIC PAYROLL DATA TO IMPROVE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title XI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1301, et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 1183 the following:

''

''INFORMATION EXCHANGE WITH PAYROLL DATA PROVIDERS

''SEC. 1184. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of Social Security may enter into an information exchange with a payroll data provider for purposes of—

''(1) efficiently administering—

''(A) monthly insurance benefits under subsections (d)(1)(B)(ii), (d)(6)(A)(ii), (d)(6)(B), (e)(1)(B)(ii), and (f)(1)(B)(ii) of section 202 and subsection (a)(1) of section 223; and

''(B) supplemental security income benefits under title XVI; and

''(2) preventing improper payments of such benefits without the need for verification by independent or collateral sources.

''(b) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Before entering into an information exchange pursuant to subsection (a), the Commissioner shall publish in the Federal Register a notice describing the information exchange and the extent to which the information received through such exchange is—

''(1) relevant and necessary to—

''(A) accurately determine entitlement to, and the amount of, benefits described under subparagraph (A) of subsection (a)(1);

''(B) accurately determine eligibility for, and the amount of, benefits described in subparagraph (B) of such subsection; and

''(C) prevent improper payment of such benefits; and

''(2) sufficiently accurate, up-to-date, and complete.

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

''(1) PAYROLL DATA PROVIDER.—The term 'payroll data provider' means payroll providers, wage verification companies, and other commercial or non-commercial entities that collect and maintain data regarding employment and wages, without regard to whether the entity provides such data for a fee or without cost.

''(2) INFORMATION EXCHANGE.—The term 'information exchange' means the automated comparison of a system of records maintained by the commissioner of Social Security with records maintained by a payroll data provider.''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION TO ACCESS INFORMATION HELD BY PAYROLL DATA PROVIDERS.—

(1) AMENDMENT TO TITLE II.—Section 225 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 425) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) ACCESS TO INFORMATION HELD BY PAYROLL DATA PROVIDERS.—(1) The Commissioner of Social Security may require each individual who applies for or is entitled to monthly insurance benefits under subsections (d)(1)(B)(ii), (d)(6)(A)(ii), (d)(6)(B), (e)(1)(B)(ii), and (f)(1)(B)(ii) of section 202 and subsection (a)(1) of section 223 to provide authorization by the individual for the Commissioner to obtain from any payroll data provider (as defined in section 1184(c)(1)) any record held by the payroll data provider with respect to the individual whenever the Commissioner determines the record is needed in connection with a determination of initial or ongoing entitlement to such benefits.

''(2) An authorization provided by an individual under this subsection shall remain effective until the earliest of—

''(A) the rendering of a final adverse decision on the individual's application or entitlement to benefits under this title;

''(B) the termination of the individual's entitlement to benefits under this title; or

''(C) the express revocation by the individual of the authorization, in a written notification to the Commissioner.

''(3) The Commissioner of Social Security is not required to furnish any authorization obtained pursuant to this subsection to the payroll data provider.

''(4) The Commissioner shall inform any person who provides authorization pursuant to this clause of the duration and scope of the authorization.

''(5) If an individual who applies for or is entitled to benefits under this title refuses to provide, or revokes, any authorization under this subsection, subsection (d) shall not apply to such individual beginning with the first day of the first month in which he or she refuses or revokes such authorization.''.

(2) TITLE XVI.—Section 1631(e)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1383(e)(1)(B)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(iii)(I) The Commissioner of Social Security may require each applicant for, or recipient of, benefits under this title to provide authorization by the applicant, recipient or legal guardian (or by any other person whose income or resources are material to the determination of the eligibility of the applicant or recipient for such benefits) for the Commissioner to obtain from any payroll data provider (as defined in section 1184(c)(1)) any record held by the payroll data provider with respect to the applicant or recipient (or any such other person) whenever the Commissioner determines the record is needed in

connection with a determination of initial or ongoing eligibility or the amount of such benefits.

''(II) An authorization provided by an applicant, recipient or legal guardian (or any other person whose income or resources are material to the determination of the eligibility of the applicant or recipient) under this clause shall remain effective until the earliest of—

''(aa) the rendering of a final adverse decision on the applicant's application for eligibility for benefits under this title;

''(bb) the cessation of the recipient's eligibility for benefits under this title;

''(cc) the express revocation by the applicant, or recipient (or such other person referred to in subclause (I)) of the authorization, in a written notification to the Commissioner; or

''(dd) the termination of the basis upon which the Commissioner considers another person's income and resources available to the applicant or recipient.

''(III) The Commissioner of Social Security is not required to furnish any authorization obtained pursuant to this clause to the payroll data provider.

''(IV) The Commissioner shall inform any person who provides authorization pursuant to this clause of the duration and scope of the authorization.

''(V) If an applicant for, or recipient of, benefits under this title (or any such other person referred to in subclause (I)) refuses to provide, or revokes, any authorization required by subclause (I), paragraph (2)(B) and paragraph (10) shall not apply to such applicant or recipient beginning with the first day of the first month in which he or she refuses or revokes such authorization.''.

(c) REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BENEFICIARIES SUBJECT TO INFORMATION EXCHANGE WITH PAYROLL DATA PROVIDER.—

(1) AMENDMENT TO TITLE II.—Section 225 of the Social Security (42 U.S.C. 425), as amended by subsection (b)(1), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) An individual who has authorized the Commissioner of Social Security to obtain records from a payroll data provider under subsection (c) shall not be subject to a penalty under section 1129A for any omission or error with respect to such individual's wages as reported by the payroll data provider.''.

(2) AMENDMENT TO TITLE XVI.—Section 1631(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1383(e)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking ''In the case of the failure'' and inserting ''(A) In the case of the failure'';

(ii) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (C) as clauses (i) through (iii), respectively; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), the Commissioner of Social Security shall find that good cause exists for the failure of, or delay by, an individual in submitting a report of an event or change in circumstances relevant to eligibility for or amount of benefits under this title in any case where—

''(i) the individual (or another person referred to in paragraph (1)(B)(iii)(I)) has provided authorization to the Commissioner to access payroll data records related to the individual; and

''(ii) the event or change in circumstance is a change in the individual's employer.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(10) An individual who has authorized the Commissioner of Social Security to obtain records from a payroll data provider under paragraph (1)(B)(iii) (or on whose behalf another person described in subclause (I) of such paragraph has provided such authorization) shall not be subject to a penalty under section 1129A for any omission or error with respect to such individual's wages as reported by the payroll data provider.''.

(d) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commissioner of Social Security shall prescribe by regulation procedures for implementing the Commissioner's access to and use of information held by payroll providers, including—

(1) guidelines for establishing and maintaining information exchanges with payroll providers, pursuant to section 1184 of the Social Security Act;

(2) beneficiary authorizations;

(3) reduced wage reporting responsibilities for individuals who authorize the Commissioner to access information held by payroll data providers through an information exchange; and

(4) procedures for notifying individuals in writing when they become subject to such reduced wage reporting requirements and when such reduced wage reporting requirements no longer apply to them.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 825. TREATMENT OF EARNINGS DERIVED FROM SERVICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 223(d)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 423(d)(4)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(C)(i) Subject to clause (ii), in determining when earnings derived from services demonstrate an individual's ability to engage in substantial gainful activity, such earnings shall be presumed to have been earned—

''(I) in making a determination of initial entitlement on the basis of disability, in the month in which the services were performed from which such earnings were derived; and

''(II) in any other case, in the month in which such earnings were paid.

''(ii) A presumption made under clause (i) shall not apply to a determination described in such clause if—

''(I) the Commissioner can reasonably establish, based on evidence readily available at the time of such determination, that the earnings were earned in a different month than when paid; or

''(II) in any case in which there is a determination that no benefit is payable due to earnings, after the individual is notified of the presumption made and provided with an opportunity to submit additional information along with an explanation of what additional information is needed, the individual shows to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such earnings were earned in another month.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect upon the date of the enactment of this Act, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

SEC. 826. ELECTRONIC REPORTING OF EARNINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30, 2017, the Commissioner of Social Security shall establish and implement a system that—

(1) allows an individual entitled to a monthly insurance benefit based on disability under title II of the Social Security Act (or a representative of the individual) to report to the Commissioner the individual's earnings derived from services through electronic means, including by telephone and Internet; and

(2) automatically issues a receipt to the individual (or representative) after receiving each such report.

(b) SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME REPORTING SYSTEM AS MODEL.—The Commissioner shall model the system established under subsection (a) on the electronic wage reporting systems for recipients of supplemental security income under title XVI of such Act.

Subtitle C—Protecting Social Security Benefits

SEC. 831. CLOSURE OF UNINTENDED LOOPHOLES.

(a) PRESUMED FILING OF APPLICATION BY INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR OLD-AGE INSURANCE BENEFITS AND FOR WIFE'S OR HUSBAND'S INSURANCE BENEFITS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 202(r) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402(r)) is amended by striking paragraphs (1) and (2) and inserting the following:

''(1) If an individual is eligible for a wife's or husband's insurance benefit (except in the case of eligibility pursuant to clause (ii) of subsection (b)(1)(B) or subsection (c)(1)(B), as appropriate), in any month for which the individual is entitled to an old-age insurance benefit, such individual shall be deemed to have filed an application for wife's or husband's insurance benefits for such month.

''(2) If an individual is eligible (but for section 202(k)(4)) for an old-age insurance benefit in any month for which the individual is entitled to a wife's or husband's insurance benefit (except in the case of entitlement pursuant to clause (ii) of subsection (b)(1)(B) or subsection (c)(1)(B), as appropriate), such individual shall be deemed to have filed an application for old-age insurance benefits—

''(A) for such month, or

''(B) if such individual is also entitled to a disability insurance benefit for such month, in the first subsequent month for which such individual is not entitled to a disability insurance benefit.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 202 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)(1), by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(B)(i) has attained age 62, or

''(ii) in the case of a wife, has in her care (individually or jointly with such individual) at the time of filing such application a child entitled to a child's insurance benefit on the basis of the wages and self-employment income of such individual,''; and

(B) in subsection (c)(1), by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(B)(i) has attained age 62, or

''(ii) in the case of a husband, has in his care (individually or jointly with such individual) at the time of filing such application a child entitled to a child's insurance benefit on the basis of the wages and self-employment income of such individual,''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply with respect to individuals who attain age 62 in any calendar year after 2015.

(b) VOLUNTARY SUSPENSION OF BENEFITS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 202 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(z) VOLUNTARY SUSPENSION.—(1)(A) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, any individual who has attained retirement age (as defined in section 216(l)) and is entitled to old-age insurance benefits may request that payment of such benefits be suspended—

''(i) beginning with the month following the month in which such request is received by the Commissioner, and

''(ii) ending with the earlier of the month following the month in which a request by the individual for a resumption of such benefits is so received or the month following the month in which the individual attains the age of 70.

''(2) An individual may not suspend such benefits under this subsection, and any suspension of such benefits under this subsection shall end, effective with respect to any month in which the individual becomes subject to—

''(A) mandatory suspension of such benefits under section 202(x);

''(B) termination of such benefits under section 202(n);

''(C) a penalty under section 1129A imposing nonpayment of such benefits; or

''(D) any other withholding, in whole or in part, of such benefits under any other provision of law that authorizes recovery of a debt by withholding such benefits.

''(3) In the case of an individual who requests that such benefits be suspended under this subsection, for any month during the period in which the suspension is in effect—

''(A) no retroactive benefits (as defined in subsection (j)(4)(B)(iii)) shall be payable to such individual;

''(B) no monthly benefit shall be payable to any other individual on the basis of such individual's wages and self-employment income; and

''(C) no monthly benefit shall be payable to such individual on the basis of another individual's wages and self-employment income.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 202(w)(2)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402(w)(2)(B)(ii)) is amended by inserting ''under section 202(z)'' after ''request''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply with respect to requests for benefit suspension submitted beginning at least 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 832. REQUIREMENT FOR MEDICAL REVIEW.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 221(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 421(h)) is amended to read as follows:

''(h) An initial determination under subsection (a), (c), (g), or (i) shall not be made until the Commissioner of Social Security has made every reasonable effort to ensure—

''(1) in any case where there is evidence which indicates the existence of a mental impairment, that a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist has completed the medical portion of the case review and any applicable residual functional capacity assessment; and

''(2) in any case where there is evidence which indicates the existence of a physical impairment, that a qualified physician has completed the medical portion of the case review and any applicable residual functional capacity assessment.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to determinations of disability made on or after the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 833. REALLOCATION OF PAYROLL TAX REVENUE.

(1) WAGES.—Section 201(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''and (R) 1.80 per centum of the wages (as so defined) paid after December 31, 1999, and so reported'' and inserting ''(R) 1.80 per centum of the wages (as so defined) paid after December 31, 1999, and before January 1, 2016, and so reported, (S) 2.37 per centum of the wages (as so defined) paid after December 31, 2015, and before January 1, 2019, and so reported, and (T) 1.80 per centum of the wages (as so defined) paid after December 31, 2018, and so reported,''.

(2) SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME.—Section 201(b)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 401(b)(2)) is amended by striking ''and (R) 1.80 per centum of the amount of self-employment income (as so defined) so reported for any taxable year beginning after December 31, 1999'' and inserting ''(R) 1.80 per centum of the amount of self-employment income (as so defined) so reported for any taxable year beginning after December 31, 1999, and before January 1, 2016, (S) 2.37 per centum of the amount of self-employment income (as so defined) so reported for any taxable year beginning after December 31, 2015, and before January 1, 2019, and (T) 1.80 per centum of the amount of self-employment income (as so defined) so reported for any taxable year beginning after December 31, 2018''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to wages paid after December 31, 2015, and self-employment income for taxable years beginning after such date.

SEC. 834. ACCESS TO FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR WAIVERS AND ADJUSTMENTS OF RECOVERY.

(a) ACCESS TO FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR OLD-AGE, SURVIVORS, AND DISABILITY INSURANCE WAIVERS.—Section 204(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 404(b)) is amended to read as follows:

''(b)(1) In any case in which more than the correct amount of payment has been made, there shall be no adjustment of payments to, or recovery by the United States from, any person who is without fault if such adjustment or recovery would defeat the purpose of this title or would be against equity and good conscience.

''(2) In making for purposes of this subsection any determination of whether any individual is without fault, the Commissioner of Social Security shall specifically take into account any physical, mental, educational, or linguistic limitation such individual may have (including any lack of facility with the English language).

''(3)(A) In making for purposes of this subsection any determination of whether such adjustment or recovery would defeat the purpose of this title, the Commissioner of Social Security shall require an individual to provide authorization for the Commissioner to obtain (subject to the cost reimbursement requirements of section 1115(a) of the Right to Financial Privacy Act) from any financial institution (within the meaning of section 1101(1) of such Act) any financial record (within the meaning of section 1101(2) of such Act) held by the institution with respect to such individual whenever the Commissioner determines the record is needed in connection with a determination with respect to such adjustment or recovery.

''(B) Notwithstanding section 1104(a)(1) of the Right to Financial Privacy Act, an authorization provided by an individual pursuant this paragraph shall remain effective until the earlier of—

''(i) the rendering of a final decision on whether adjustment or recovery would defeat the purpose of this title; or

''(ii) the express revocation by the individual of the authorization, in a written notification to the Commissioner.

''(C)(i) An authorization obtained by the Commissioner of Social Security pursuant this paragraph shall be considered to meet the requirements of the Right to Financial Privacy Act for purposes of section 1103(a) of such Act, and need not be furnished to the financial institution, notwithstanding section 1104(a) of such Act.

''(ii) The certification requirements of section 1103(b) of the Right to Financial Privacy Act shall not apply to requests by the Commissioner of Social Security pursuant to an authorization provided under this paragraph.

''(iii) A request by the Commissioner pursuant to an authorization provided under this paragraph is deemed to meet the requirements of section 1104(a)(3) of the Right to Financial Privacy Act and the flush language of section 1102 of such Act.

''(D) The Commissioner shall inform any person who provides authorization pursuant to this paragraph of the duration and scope of the authorization.

''(E) If an individual refuses to provide, or revokes, any authorization for the Commissioner of Social Security to obtain from any financial institution any financial record, the Commissioner may, on that basis, determine that adjustment or recovery would not defeat the purpose of this title.''.

(b) ACCESS TO FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME WAIVERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1631(b)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1383(b)(1)(B)) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''In making for purposes of this subparagraph a determination of whether an adjustment or recovery would defeat the purpose of this title, the Commissioner of Social Security shall require an individual to provide authorization for the Commissioner to obtain (subject to the cost reimbursement requirements of section 1115(a) of the Right to Financial Privacy Act) from any financial institution (within the meaning of section 1101(1) of such Act) any financial record (within the meaning of section 1101(2) of such Act) held by the institution with respect to such individual whenever the Commissioner determines that the record is needed in connection with a determination with respect to such adjustment or recovery, under the terms and conditions established under subsection (e)(1)(B).''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1631(e)(1)(B)(ii)(V) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1383(e)(1)(B)(ii)(V)) is amended by inserting '', determine that adjustment or recovery on account of an overpayment with respect to the applicant or recipient would not defeat the purpose of this title, or both'' before the period at the end.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to determinations made on or after the date that is 3 months after the date of the enactment of this section.

Subtitle D—Relieving Administrative Burdens and Miscellaneous Provisions

SEC. 841. INTERAGENCY COORDINATION TO IMPROVE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title XI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1301 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 1127 the following:

''INTERAGENCY COORDINATION TO IMPROVE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

''SEC. 1127A. (a) COORDINATION AGREEMENT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including section 207 of this Act, the Commissioner of Social Security (referred to in this section as 'the Commissioner') and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (referred to in this section as 'the Director') shall enter into an agreement under which a system is established to carry out the following procedure:

''(1) The Director shall notify the Commissioner when any individual is determined to be entitled to a monthly disability annuity payment pursuant to subchapter V of chapter 84 of subpart G of part III of title 5, United States Code, and shall certify that such individual has provided the authorization described in subsection (f).

''(2) If the Commissioner determines that an individual described in paragraph (1) is also entitled to past-due benefits under section 223, the Commissioner shall notify the Director of such fact.

''(3) Not later than 30 days after receiving a notification described in paragraph (2) with respect to an individual, the Director shall provide the Commissioner with the total amount of any disability annuity overpayments made to such individual, as well as any other information (in such form and manner as the Commissioner shall require) that the Commissioner determines is necessary to carry out this section.

''(4) If the Director provides the Commissioner with the information described in paragraph (3) in a timely manner, the Commissioner may withhold past-due benefits under section 223 to which such individual is entitled and may pay the amount described in paragraph (3) to the Office of Personnel Management for any disability annuity overpayments made to such individual.

''(5) The Director shall credit any amount received under paragraph (4) with respect to an individual toward any disability annuity overpayment owed by such individual.

''(b) LIMITATIONS.—

''(1) PRIORITY OF OTHER REDUCTIONS.—Benefits shall only be withheld under this section after any other reduction applicable under this Act, including sections 206(a)(4), 224, and 1127(a).

''(2) TIMELY NOTIFICATION REQUIRED.—The Commissioner may not withhold benefits under this section if the Director does not provide the notice described in subsection (a)(3) within the time period described in such subsection.

''(c) DELAYED PAYMENT OF PAST-DUE BENEFITS.—If the Commissioner is required to make a notification described in subsection (a)(2) with respect to an individual, the Commissioner shall not make any payment of past-due benefits under section 223 to such individual until after the period described in subsection (a)(3).

''(d) REVIEW.—Notwithstanding section 205 or any other provision of law, any determination regarding the withholding of past-due benefits under this section shall only be subject to adjudication and review by the Director under section 8461 of title 5, United States Code.

''(e) DISABILITY ANNUITY OVERPAYMENT DEFINED.—For purposes of this section, the term 'disability annuity overpayment' means the amount of the reduction under section 8452(a)(2) of title 5, United States Code, applicable to a monthly annuity payment made to an individual pursuant to subchapter V of chapter 84 of subpart G of part III of such title due to the individual's concurrent entitlement to a disability insurance benefit under section 223 during such month.

''(f) AUTHORIZATION TO WITHHOLD BENEFITS.—The authorization described in this subsection, with respect to an individual, is written authorization provided by the individual to the Director which authorizes the Commissioner to withhold past-due benefits under section 223 to which such individual is entitled in order to pay the amount withheld to the Office of Personnel Management for any disability overpayments made to such individual.

''(g) EXPENSES.—The Director shall pay to the Social Security Administration an amount equal to the amount estimated by the Commissioner as the total cost incurred by the Social Security Administration in carrying out this section for each calendar quarter.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to past-due disability insurance benefits payable on or after the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this section.

SEC. 842. ELIMINATION OF QUINQUENNIAL DETERMINATIONS RELATING TO WAGE CREDITS FOR MILITARY SERVICE PRIOR TO 1957.

Section 217(g)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 417(g)(2)) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''through 2010'' after ''each fifth year thereafter''; and

(2) by inserting after the first sentence the following: ''The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall revise the amount determined under paragraph (1) with respect to the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund under title XVIII in 2015 and each fifth year thereafter through such date, and using such data, as the Secretary determines appropriate on the basis of the amount of benefits and administrative expenses actually paid from such Trust Fund under title XVIII and the relevant actuarial assumptions set forth in the report of the Board of Trustees of such Trust Fund for such year under section 1817(b).''.

SEC. 843. CERTIFICATION OF BENEFITS PAYABLE TO A DIVORCED SPOUSE OF A RAILROAD WORKER TO THE RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD.

Section 205(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(i)) is amended by inserting ''or divorced wife or divorced husband'' after ''the wife or husband''.

SEC. 844. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO ELIMINATE OBSOLETE PROVISIONS.

(a) ELIMINATION OF REFERENCE IN SECTION 226 TO A REPEALED PROVISION.—Section 226 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 426) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (i); and

(2) by redesignating subsection (j) as subsection (i).

(b) ELIMINATION OF REFERENCE IN SECTION 226A TO A REPEALED PROVISION.—Section 226A of such Act (42 U.S.C. 426-1) is amended by striking the second subsection (c).

SEC. 845. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) REPORT ON FRAUD AND IMPROPER PAYMENT PREVENTION ACTIVITIES.—Section 704(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 904(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(3) For each fiscal year beginning with 2016 and ending with 2021, the Commissioner shall include in the annual budget prepared pursuant to subparagraph (A) a report describing the purposes for which amounts made available for purposes described in section 251(b)(2)(B) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 for the fiscal year were expended by the Social Security Administration and the purposes for which the Commissioner plans for the Administration to expend such funds in the succeeding fiscal year, including—

''(A) the total such amount expended;

''(B) the amount expended on co-operative disability investigation units;

''(C) the number of cases of fraud prevented by co-operative disability investigation units and the amount expended on such cases (as reported to the Commissioner by the Inspector General of the Social Security Administration);

''(D) the number of felony cases prosecuted under section 208 (as reported to the Commissioner by the Inspector General) and the amount expended by the Social Security Administration in supporting the prosecution of such cases;

''(E) the amount of such felony cases successfully prosecuted (as reported to the Commissioner by the Inspector General) and the amount expended by the Social Security Administration in supporting the prosecution of such cases;

''(F) the amount expended on and the number of completed—

''(i) continuing disability reviews conducted by mail;

''(ii) redeterminations conducted by mail;

''(iii) medical continuing disability reviews conducted pursuant to section 221(i);

''(iv) medical continuing disability reviews conducted pursuant to 1614(a)(3)(H);

''(v) redeterminations conducted pursuant to section 1611(c); and

''(vi) work-related continuing disability reviews to determine whether earnings derived from services demonstrate an individual's ability to engage in substantial gainful activity;

''(G) the number of cases of fraud identified for which benefits were terminated as a result of medical continuing disability reviews (as reported to the Commissioner by the Inspector General), work-related continuing disability reviews, and redeterminations, and the amount of resulting savings for each such type of review or redetermination; and

''(H) the number of work-related continuing disability reviews in which a beneficiary improperly reported earnings derived from services for more than 3 consecutive months, and the amount of resulting savings.''.

(b) REPORT ON WORK-RELATED CONTINUING DISABILITY REVIEWS.—The Commissioner of Social Security shall annually submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on the number of work-related continuing disability reviews conducted each year to determine whether earnings derived from services demonstrate an individual's ability to engage in substantial gainful activity. Such report shall include—

(1) the number of individuals receiving benefits based on disability under title II of such Act for whom reports of earnings were received from any source by the Commissioner in the previous calendar year, reported as a total number and separately by the source of the report;

(2) the number of individuals for whom such reports resulted in a determination to conduct a work-related continuing disability review, and the basis on which such determinations were made;

(3) in the case of a beneficiary selected for a work-related continuing disability review on the basis of a report of earnings from any source—

(A) the average number of days—

(i) between the receipt of the report and the initiation of the review,

(ii) between the initiation and the completion of the review, and

(iii) the average amount of overpayment, if any;

(B) the number of such reviews completed during such calendar year, and the number of such reviews that resulted in a suspension or termination of benefits;

(C) the number of such reviews initiated in the current year that had not been completed as of the end of such calendar year;

(D) the number of such reviews initiated in a prior year that had not been completed as of the end of such calendar year;

(4) the total savings to the Trust Funds and the Treasury generated from benefits suspended or terminated as a result of such reviews; and

(5) with respect to individuals for whom a work-related continuing disability review was completed during such calendar year—

(A) the number who participated in the Ticket to Work program under section 1148 during such calendar year;

(B) the number who used any program work incentives during such calendar year; and

(C) the number who received vocational rehabilitation services during such calendar year with respect to which the Commissioner of Social Security reimbursed a State agency under section 222(d).

(c) REPORT ON OVERPAYMENT WAIVERS.—Not later than January 1 of each calendar year, the Commissioner of Social Security shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on—

(1) the number and total value of overpayments recovered or scheduled to be recovered by the Social Security Administration during the previous fiscal year of benefits under title II and title XVI, respectively, including

the terms and conditions of repayment of such overpayments; and

(2) the number and total value of overpayments waived by the Social Security Administration during the previous fiscal year of benefits under title II and title XVI, respectively.

SEC. 846. EXPEDITED EXAMINATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Office of Personnel Management shall, upon request of the Commissioner of Social Security, expeditiously administer a sufficient number of competitive examinations, as determined by the Commissioner, for the purpose of identifying an adequate number of candidates to be appointed as Administrative Law Judges under section 3105 of title 5, United States Code. The first such examination shall take place not later than April 1, 2016 and other examinations shall take place at such time or times requested by the Commissioner, but not later than December 31, 2022. Such examinations shall proceed even if one or more individuals who took a prior examination have appealed an adverse determination and one or more of such appeals have not concluded, provided that—

(1) the Commissioner of Social Security has made a determination that delaying the examination poses a significant risk that an adequate number of Administrative Law Judges will not be available to meet the need of the Social Security Administration to reduce or prevent a backlog of cases awaiting a hearing;

(2) an individual whose appeal is pending is provided an option to continue their appeal or elects to take the new examination, in which case the appeal is considered vacated; and

(3) an individual who decides to continue his or her appeal and who ultimately prevails in the appeal shall receive expeditious consideration for hire by the Office Personnel Management and the Commissioner of Social Security.

(b) PAYMENT OF COSTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Commissioner of Social Security shall pay the full cost associated with each examination conducted pursuant to subsection (a).

TITLE IX—TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF PUBLIC DEBT LIMIT

SEC. 901. TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF PUBLIC DEBT LIMIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, shall not apply for the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on March 15, 2017.

(b) SPECIAL RULE RELATING TO OBLIGATIONS ISSUED DURING EXTENSION PERIOD.—Effective March 16, 2017, the limitation in effect under section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, shall be increased to the extent that—

(1) the face amount of obligations issued under chapter 31 of such title and the face amount of obligations whose principal and interest are guaranteed by the United States Government (except guaranteed obligations held by the Secretary of the Treasury) outstanding on March 16, 2017, exceeds

(2) the face amount of such obligations outstanding on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 902. RESTORING CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONAL DEBT.

(a) EXTENSION LIMITED TO NECESSARY OBLIGATIONS.—An obligation shall not be taken into account under section 901(b)(1) unless the issuance of such obligation was necessary to fund a commitment incurred pursuant to law by the Federal Government that required payment before March 16, 2017.

(b) PROHIBITION ON CREATION OF CASH RESERVE DURING EXTENSION PERIOD.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall not issue obligations during the period specified in section 901(a) for the purpose of increasing the cash balance above normal operating balances in anticipation of the expiration of such period.

TITLE X—SPECTRUM PIPELINE

SEC. 1001. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Spectrum Pipeline Act of 2015''.

SEC. 1002. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term ''Assistant Secretary'' means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(2) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the Federal Communications Commission.

(3) FEDERAL ENTITY.—The term ''Federal entity'' has the meaning given such term in section 113(l) of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act (47 U.S.C. 923(l)).

(4) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Commerce.

SEC. 1003. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Each range of frequencies described in this title shall be construed to be inclusive of the upper and lower frequencies in the range.

SEC. 1004. IDENTIFICATION, REALLOCATION, AND AUCTION OF FEDERAL SPECTRUM.

(a) IDENTIFICATION OF SPECTRUM.—Not later than January 1, 2022, the Secretary shall submit to the President and to the Commission a report identifying 30 megahertz of electromagnetic spectrum (in bands of not less than 10 megahertz of contiguous frequencies) below the frequency of 3 gigahertz (except for the spectrum between the frequencies of 1675 megahertz and 1695 megahertz) for reallocation from Federal use to non-Federal use or shared Federal and non-Federal use, or a combination thereof.

(b) CLEARING OF SPECTRUM.—The President shall—

(1) not later than January 1, 2022, begin the process of withdrawing or modifying the assignment to a Federal Government station of the electromagnetic spectrum identified under subsection (a); and

(2) not later than 30 days after completing the withdrawal or modification, notify the Commission that the withdrawal or modification is complete.

(c) REALLOCATION AND AUCTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

(A) reallocate the electromagnetic spectrum identified under subsection (a) for non-Federal use or shared Federal and non-Federal use, or a combination thereof; and

(B) notwithstanding paragraph (15)(A) of section 309(j) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 309(j)), not later than July 1, 2024, begin a system of competitive bidding under such section to grant new initial licenses for the use of such spectrum, subject to flexible-use service rules.

(2) PROCEEDS TO COVER 110 PERCENT OF FEDERAL RELOCATION OR SHARING COSTS.—Nothing in paragraph (1) shall be construed to relieve the Commission from the requirements of section 309(j)(16)(B) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 309(j)(16)(B)).

SEC. 1005. ADDITIONAL USES OF SPECTRUM RELOCATION FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 118 of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act (47 U.S.C. 928) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (i); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (f) the following:

''(g) ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES.—

''(1) AMOUNTS AVAILABLE.—Notwithstanding subsections (c) through (e)—

''(A) there are appropriated from the Fund on the date of the enactment of the Spectrum Pipeline Act of 2015, and available to the Director of OMB for use in accordance with paragraph (2), not more than $500,000,000 from amounts in the Fund on such date of enactment; and

''(B) there are appropriated from the Fund after such date of enactment, and available to the Director of OMB for use in accordance with such paragraph, not more than 10 percent of the amounts deposited in the Fund after such date of enactment.

''(2) USE OF AMOUNTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Director of OMB may use amounts made available under paragraph (1) to make payments requested by Federal entities for research and development, engineering studies, economic analyses, activities with respect to systems, or other planning activities intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the spectrum use of Federal entities in order to make available frequencies described in subparagraph (C) for reallocation for non-Federal use or shared Federal and non-Federal use, or a combination thereof, and for auction in accordance with such reallocation.

''(B) SYSTEMS THAT IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FEDERAL SPECTRUM USE.—For purposes of a payment under subparagraph (A) for activities with respect to systems that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the spectrum use of Federal entities, such systems include the following:

''(i) Systems that have increased functionality or that increase the ability of a Federal entity to accommodate spectrum sharing with non-Federal entities.

''(ii) Systems that consolidate functions or services that have been provided using separate systems.

''(iii) Non-spectrum technology or systems.

''(C) FREQUENCIES DESCRIBED.—The frequencies described in this subparagraph are, with respect to a payment under subparagraph (A), frequencies that—

''(i) are assigned to a Federal entity; and

''(ii) at the time of the activities conducted with such payment, are not identified for auction.

''(D) CONDITIONS.—The Director of OMB may not make a payment to a Federal entity under subparagraph (A)—

''(i) unless—

''(I) the Federal entity has submitted to the Technical Panel established under section 113(h)(3) a plan describing the activities that the Federal entity will conduct with such payment;

''(II) the Technical Panel has approved such plan under subparagraph (E); and

''(III) the Director of OMB has submitted the plan approved under subparagraph (E) to the congressional committees described in subsection (d)(2)(C); and

''(ii) until 60 days have elapsed after submission of the plan under clause (i)(III).

''(E) REVIEW BY TECHNICAL PANEL.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after a Federal entity submits a plan under subparagraph (D)(i)(I) to the Technical Panel established under section 113(h)(3), the Technical Panel shall approve or disapprove such plan.

''(ii) CRITERIA FOR REVIEW.—In considering whether to approve or disapprove a plan under this subparagraph, the Technical Panel shall consider whether—

''(I) the activities that the Federal entity will conduct with the payment will—

''(aa) increase the probability of relocation from or sharing of Federal spectrum;

''(bb) facilitate an auction intended to occur not later than 8 years after the payment; and

''(cc) increase the net expected auction proceeds in an amount not less than the time value of the amount of the payment; and

''(II) the transfer will leave sufficient amounts in the Fund for the other purposes of the Fund.

''(h) PRIORITIZATION OF PAYMENTS.—In determining whether to make payments under subsections (f) and (g), the Director of OMB shall, to the extent practicable, prioritize payments under subsection (g).''.

(b) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR TECHNICAL PANEL.—Section 113(h)(3)(C) of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act (47 U.S.C. 923(h)(3)(C)) is amended by striking ''this subsection and subsection (i)'' and inserting ''this subsection, subsection (i), and section 118(g)(2)(E)''.

(c) ELIGIBLE FEDERAL ENTITIES.—Section 113 of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act (47 U.S.C. 923) is amended—

(1) in subsection (g)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''authorized to use a band of eligible frequencies described in paragraph (2) and'';

(ii) by inserting ''eligible'' after ''auction of'';

(iii) by inserting ''eligible'' after ''reallocation of''; and

(B) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking ''previously assigned to such entity or the sharing of spectrum frequencies assigned to such entity'' and inserting ''or the sharing of spectrum frequencies''; and

(2) in subsection (h)(1), by striking ''authorized to use any such frequency''.

SEC. 1006. PLANS FOR AUCTION OF CERTAIN SPECTRUM.

(a) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—In accordance with each paragraph of subsection (c), the Commission, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary, shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing a proposed plan for the assignment of new licenses for non-Federal use of the spectrum identified under such paragraph, including—

(1) an assessment of the operations of Federal entities that operate Federal Government stations authorized to use such spectrum;

(2) an estimated timeline for the competitive bidding process; and

(3) a proposed plan for balance between unlicensed and licensed use.

(b) INFORMATION FOR ASSESSMENT OF FEDERAL ENTITY OPERATIONS.—The Assistant Secretary, in coordination with the affected Federal entities, shall provide to the Commission the necessary information to carry out subsection (a)(1).

(c) REPORT DEADLINES; IDENTIFICATION OF SPECTRUM.—The Commission shall submit reports under subsection (a) as follows:

(1) Not later than January 1, 2022, for at least 50 megahertz of spectrum (in bands of not less than 10 megahertz of contiguous frequencies) below 6 gigahertz, to be identified by the Commission, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary, from spectrum other than the spectrum identified under section 1004(a).

(2) Not later than January 1, 2024, for at least 50 megahertz of spectrum (in bands of not less than 10 megahertz of contiguous frequencies) below 6 gigahertz, to be identified by the Commission, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary, from spectrum other than the spectrum identified under paragraph (1) or section 1004(a).

SEC. 1007. FCC AUCTION AUTHORITY.

Section 309(j)(11) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 309(j)(11)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', except that, with respect to the electromagnetic spectrum identified under section 1004(a) of the Spectrum Pipeline Act of 2015, such authority shall expire on September 30, 2025''.

SEC. 1008. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to Congress—

(1) a report containing an analysis of the results of the rules changes relating to the frequencies between 3550 megahertz and 3650 megahertz; and

(2) a report containing an analysis of proposals to promote and identify additional spectrum bands that can be shared between incumbent uses and new licensed, and unlicensed services under such rules and identification of at least 1 gigahertz between 6 gigahertz and 57 GHz for such use.

TITLE XI—REVENUE PROVISIONS RELATED TO TAX COMPLIANCE

SEC. 1101. PARTNERSHIP AUDITS AND ADJUSTMENTS.

(a) REPEAL OF TEFRA PARTNERSHIP AUDIT RULES.—Chapter 63 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking subchapter C (and by striking the item relating to such subchapter in the table of subchapters for such chapter).

(b) REPEAL OF ELECTING LARGE PARTNERSHIP RULES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter K of chapter 1 of such Code is amended by striking part IV (and by striking the item relating to such part in the table of parts for such subchapter).

(2) ASSESSMENT RULES RELATING TO ELECTING LARGE PARTNERSHIPS.—Chapter 63 of such Code is amended by striking subchapter D (and by striking the item relating to such subchapter in the table of subchapters for such chapter).

(c) PARTNERSHIP AUDIT REFORM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 63 of such Code, as amended by the preceding provisions of this section, is amended by inserting after subchapter B the following new subchapter:

''Subchapter C—Treatment of Partnerships

''PART I—IN GENERAL

''PART II—PARTNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS

''PART III—PROCEDURE

''PART IV—DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL RULES

''PART I—IN GENERAL

''SEC. 6221. DETERMINATION AT PARTNERSHIP LEVEL.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Any adjustment to items of income, gain, loss, deduction, or credit of a partnership for a partnership taxable year (and any partner's distributive share thereof) shall be determined, any tax attributable thereto shall be assessed and collected, and the applicability of any penalty, addition to tax, or additional amount which relates to an adjustment to any such item or share shall be determined, at the partnership level pursuant to this subchapter.

''(b) ELECTION OUT FOR CERTAIN PARTNERSHIPS WITH 100 OR FEWER PARTNERS, ETC.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—This subchapter shall not apply with respect to any partnership for any taxable year if—

''(A) the partnership elects the application of this subsection for such taxable year,

''(B) for such taxable year the partnership is required to furnish 100 or fewer statements under section 6031(b) with respect to its partners,

''(C) each of the partners of such partnership is an individual, a C corporation, any foreign entity that would be treated as a C corporation were it domestic, an S corporation, or an estate of a deceased partner,

''(D) the election—

''(i) is made with a timely filed return for such taxable year, and

''(ii) includes (in the manner prescribed by the Secretary) a disclosure of the name and taxpayer identification number of each partner of such partnership, and

''(E) the partnership notifies each such partner of such election in the manner prescribed by the Secretary.

''(2) SPECIAL RULES RELATING TO CERTAIN PARTNERS.—

''(A) S CORPORATION PARTNERS.—In the case of a partner that is an S corporation—

''(i) the partnership shall only be treated as meeting the requirements of paragraph (1)(C) with respect to such partner if such partnership includes (in the manner prescribed by the Secretary) a disclosure of the name and taxpayer identification number of each person with respect to whom such S corporation is required to furnish a statement under section 6037(b) for the taxable year of the S corporation ending with or within the partnership taxable year for which the application of this subsection is elected, and

''(ii) the statements such S corporation is required to so furnish shall be treated as statements furnished by the partnership for purposes of paragraph (1)(B).

''(B) FOREIGN PARTNERS.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(D)(ii), the Secretary may provide for alternative identification of any foreign partners.

''(C) OTHER PARTNERS.—The Secretary may by regulation or other guidance prescribe rules similar to the rules of subparagraph (A) with respect to any partners not described in such subparagraph or paragraph (1)(C).

''SEC. 6222. PARTNER'S RETURN MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH PARTNERSHIP RETURN.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—A partner shall, on the partner's return, treat each item of income, gain, loss, deduction, or credit attributable to a partnership in a manner which is consistent with the treatment of such income, gain, loss, deduction, or credit on the partnership return.

''(b) UNDERPAYMENT DUE TO INCONSISTENT TREATMENT ASSESSED AS MATH ERROR.—Any underpayment of tax by a partner by reason of failing to comply with the requirements of subsection (a) shall be assessed and collected in the same manner as if such underpayment were on account of a mathematical or clerical error appearing on the partner's return. Paragraph (2) of section 6213(b) shall not apply to any assessment of an underpayment referred to in the preceding sentence.

''(c) EXCEPTION FOR NOTIFICATION OF INCONSISTENT TREATMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any item referred to in subsection (a), if—

''(A)(i) the partnership has filed a return but the partner's treatment on the partner's return is (or may be) inconsistent with the treatment of the item on the partnership return, or

''(ii) the partnership has not filed a return, and

''(B) the partner files with the Secretary a statement identifying the inconsistency,

subsections (a) and (b) shall not apply to such item.

''(2) PARTNER RECEIVING INCORRECT INFORMATION.—A partner shall be treated as having complied with subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) with respect to an item if the partner—

''(A) demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the treatment of the item

on the partner's return is consistent with the treatment of the item on the statement furnished to the partner by the partnership, and

''(B) elects to have this paragraph apply with respect to that item.

''(d) FINAL DECISION ON CERTAIN POSITIONS NOT BINDING ON PARTNERSHIP.—Any final decision with respect to an inconsistent position identified under subsection (c) in a proceeding to which the partnership is not a party shall not be binding on the partnership.

''(e) ADDITION TO TAX FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH SECTION.—For addition to tax in the case of a partner's disregard of the requirements of this section, see part II of subchapter A of chapter 68.

''SEC. 6223. PARTNERS BOUND BY ACTIONS OF PARTNERSHIP.

''(a) DESIGNATION OF PARTNERSHIP REPRESENTATIVE.—Each partnership shall designate (in the manner prescribed by the Secretary) a partner (or other person) with a substantial presence in the United States as the partnership representative who shall have the sole authority to act on behalf of the partnership under this subchapter. In any case in which such a designation is not in effect, the Secretary may select any person as the partnership representative.

''(b) BINDING EFFECT.—A partnership and all partners of such partnership shall be bound—

''(1) by actions taken under this subchapter by the partnership, and

''(2) by any final decision in a proceeding brought under this subchapter with respect to the partnership.

''PART II—PARTNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS

''SEC. 6225. PARTNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT BY SECRETARY.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any adjustment by the Secretary in the amount of any item of income, gain, loss, deduction, or credit of a partnership, or any partner's distributive share thereof—

''(1) the partnership shall pay any imputed underpayment with respect to such adjustment in the adjustment year as provided in section 6232, and

''(2) any adjustment that does not result in an imputed underpayment shall be taken into account by the partnership in the adjustment year—

''(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), as a reduction in non-separately stated income or an increase in non-separately stated loss (whichever is appropriate) under section 702(a)(8), or

''(B) in the case of an item of credit, as a separately stated item.

''(b) DETERMINATION OF IMPUTED UNDERPAYMENTS.—For purposes of this subchapter—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (c), any imputed underpayment with respect to any partnership adjustment for any reviewed year shall be determined—

''(A) by netting all adjustments of items of income, gain, loss, or deduction and multiplying such net amount by the highest rate of tax in effect for the reviewed year under section 1 or 11,

''(B) by treating any net increase or decrease in loss under subparagraph (A) as a decrease or increase, respectively, in income, and

''(C) by taking into account any adjustments to items of credit as an increase or decrease, as the case may be, in the amount determined under subparagraph (A).

''(2) ADJUSTMENTS TO DISTRIBUTIVE SHARES OF PARTNERS NOT NETTED.—In the case of any adjustment which reallocates the distributive share of any item from one partner to another, such adjustment shall be taken into account under paragraph (1) by disregarding—

''(A) any decrease in any item of income or gain, and

''(B) any increase in any item of deduction, loss, or credit.

''(c) MODIFICATION OF IMPUTED UNDERPAYMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish procedures under which the imputed underpayment amount may be modified consistent with the requirements of this subsection.

''(2) AMENDED RETURNS OF PARTNERS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Such procedures shall provide that if—

''(i) one or more partners file returns (notwithstanding section 6511) for the taxable year of the partners which includes the end of the reviewed year of the partnership,

''(ii) such returns take into account all adjustments under subsection (a) properly allocable to such partners (and for any other taxable year with respect to which any tax attribute is affected by reason of such adjustments), and

''(iii) payment of any tax due is included with such return,

then the imputed underpayment amount shall be determined without regard to the portion of the adjustments so taken into account.

''(B) REALLOCATION OF DISTRIBUTIVE SHARE.—In the case of any adjustment which reallocates the distributive share of any item from one partner to another, paragraph (2) shall apply only if returns are filed by all partners affected by such adjustment.

''(3) TAX-EXEMPT PARTNERS.—Such procedures shall provide for determining the imputed underpayment without regard to the portion thereof that the partnership demonstrates is allocable to a partner that would not owe tax by reason of its status as a tax-exempt entity (as defined in section 168(h)(2)).

''(4) MODIFICATION OF APPLICABLE HIGHEST TAX RATES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Such procedures shall provide for taking into account a rate of tax lower than the rate of tax described in subsection (b)(1)(A) with respect to any portion of the imputed underpayment that the partnership demonstrates is allocable to a partner which—

''(i) in the case of ordinary income, is a C corporation, or

''(ii) in the case of a capital gain or qualified dividend, is an individual.

In no event shall the lower rate determined under the preceding sentence be less than the highest rate in effect with respect to the income and taxpayer described in clause (i) or clause (ii), as the case may be. For purposes of clause (ii), an S corporation shall be treated as an individual.

''(B) PORTION OF IMPUTED UNDERPAYMENT TO WHICH LOWER RATE APPLIES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), the portion of the imputed underpayment to which the lower rate applies with respect to a partner under subparagraph (A) shall be determined by reference to the partners' distributive share of items to which the imputed underpayment relates.

''(ii) RULE IN CASE OF VARIED TREATMENT OF ITEMS AMONG PARTNERS.—If the imputed underpayment is attributable to the adjustment of more than 1 item, and any partner's distributive share of such items is not the same with respect to all such items, then the portion of the imputed underpayment to which the lower rate applies with respect to a partner under subparagraph (A) shall be determined by reference to the amount which would have been the partner's distributive share of net gain or loss if the partnership had sold all of its assets at their fair market value as of the close of the reviewed year of the partnership.

''(5) OTHER PROCEDURES FOR MODIFICATION OF IMPUTED UNDERPAYMENT.—The Secretary may by regulations or guidance provide for additional procedures to modify imputed underpayment amounts on the basis of such other factors as the Secretary determines are necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of this subsection.

''(6) YEAR AND DAY FOR SUBMISSION TO SECRETARY.—Anything required to be submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be submitted to the Secretary not later than the close of the 270-day period beginning on the date on which the notice of a proposed partnership adjustment is mailed under section 6231 unless such period is extended with the consent of the Secretary.

''(7) DECISION OF SECRETARY.—Any modification of the imputed underpayment amount under this subsection shall be made only upon approval of such modification by the Secretary.

''(d) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subchapter—

''(1) REVIEWED YEAR.—The term 'reviewed year' means the partnership taxable year to which the item being adjusted relates.

''(2) ADJUSTMENT YEAR.—The term 'adjustment year' means the partnership taxable year in which—

''(A) in the case of an adjustment pursuant to the decision of a court in a proceeding brought under section 6234, such decision becomes final,

''(B) in the case of an administrative adjustment request under section 6227, such administrative adjustment request is made, or

''(C) in any other case, notice of the final partnership adjustment is mailed under section 6231.

''SEC. 6226. ALTERNATIVE TO PAYMENT OF IMPUTED UNDERPAYMENT BY PARTNERSHIP.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—If the partnership—

''(1) not later than 45 days after the date of the notice of final partnership adjustment, elects the application of this section with respect to an imputed underpayment, and

''(2) at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may provide, furnishes to each partner of the partnership for the reviewed year and to the Secretary a statement of the partner's share of any adjustment to income, gain, loss, deduction, or credit (as determined in the notice of final partnership adjustment),

section 6225 shall not apply with respect to such underpayment and each such partner shall take such adjustment into account as provided in subsection (b). The election under paragraph (1) shall be made in such manner as the Secretary may provide and, once made, shall be revocable only with the consent of the Secretary.

''(b) ADJUSTMENTS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY PARTNER.—

''(1) TAX IMPOSED IN YEAR OF STATEMENT.—Each partner's tax imposed by chapter 1 for the taxable year which includes the date the statement was furnished under subsection (a) shall be increased by the aggregate of the adjustment amounts determined under paragraph (2) for the taxable years referred to therein.

''(2) ADJUSTMENT AMOUNTS.—The adjustment amounts determined under this paragraph are—

''(A) in the case of the taxable year of the partner which includes the end of the reviewed year, the amount by which the tax

imposed under chapter 1 would increase if the partner's share of the adjustments described in subsection (a) were taken into account for such taxable year, plus

''(B) in the case of any taxable year after the taxable year referred to in subparagraph (A) and before the taxable year referred to in paragraph (1), the amount by which the tax imposed under chapter 1 would increase by reason of the adjustment to tax attributes under paragraph (3).

''(3) ADJUSTMENT OF TAX ATTRIBUTES.—Any tax attribute which would have been affected if the adjustments described in subsection (a) were taken into account for the taxable year referred to in paragraph (2)(A) shall—

''(A) in the case of any taxable year referred to in paragraph (2)(B), be appropriately adjusted for purposes of applying such paragraph, and

''(B) in the case of any subsequent taxable year, be appropriately adjusted.

''(c) PENALTIES AND INTEREST.—

''(1) PENALTIES.—Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b), any penalties, additions to tax, or additional amount shall be determined as provided under section 6221 and the partners of the partnership for the reviewed year shall be liable for any such penalty, addition to tax, or additional amount.

''(2) INTEREST.—In the case of an imputed underpayment with respect to which the application of this section is elected, interest shall be determined—

''(A) at the partner level,

''(B) from the due date of the return for the taxable year to which the increase is attributable (determined by taking into account any increases attributable to a change in tax attributes for a taxable year under subsection (b)(2)), and

''(C) at the underpayment rate under section 6621(a)(2), determined by substituting '5 percentage points' for '3 percentage points' in subparagraph (B) thereof.

''SEC. 6227. ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENT REQUEST BY PARTNERSHIP.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—A partnership may file a request for an administrative adjustment in the amount of one or more items of income, gain, loss, deduction, or credit of the partnership for any partnership taxable year.

''(b) ADJUSTMENT.—Any such adjustment under subsection (a) shall be determined and taken into account for the partnership taxable year in which the administrative adjustment request is made—

''(1) by the partnership under rules similar to the rules of section 6225 (other than paragraphs (2), (6) and (7) of subsection (c) thereof) for the partnership taxable year in which the administrative adjustment request is made, or

''(2) by the partnership and partners under rules similar to the rules of section 6226 (determined without regard to the substitution described in subsection (c)(2)(C) thereof).

In the case of an adjustment that would not result in an imputed underpayment, paragraph (1) shall not apply and paragraph (2) shall apply with appropriate adjustments.

''(c) PERIOD OF LIMITATIONS.—A partnership may not file such a request more than 3 years after the later of—

''(1) the date on which the partnership return for such year is filed, or

''(2) the last day for filing the partnership return for such year (determined without regard to extensions).

In no event may a partnership file such a request after a notice of an administrative proceeding with respect to the taxable year is mailed under section 6231.

''PART 1—PROCEDURE

''SEC. 6231. NOTICE OF PROCEEDINGS AND ADJUSTMENT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall mail to the partnership and the partnership representative—

''(1) notice of any administrative proceeding initiated at the partnership level with respect to an adjustment of any item of income, gain, loss, deduction, or credit of a partnership for a partnership taxable year, or any partner's distributive share thereof,

''(2) notice of any proposed partnership adjustment resulting from such proceeding, and

''(3) notice of any final partnership adjustment resulting from such proceeding.

Any notice of a final partnership adjustment shall not be mailed earlier than 270 days after the date on which the notice of the proposed partnership adjustment is mailed. Such notices shall be sufficient if mailed to the last known address of the partnership representative or the partnership (even if the partnership has terminated its existence). The first sentence shall apply to any proceeding with respect to an administrative adjustment request filed by a partnership under section 6227.

''(b) FURTHER NOTICES RESTRICTED.—If the Secretary mails a notice of a final partnership adjustment to any partnership for any partnership taxable year and the partnership files a petition under section 6234 with respect to such notice, in the absence of a showing of fraud, malfeasance, or misrepresentation of a material fact, the Secretary shall not mail another such notice to such partnership with respect to such taxable year.

''(c) AUTHORITY TO RESCIND NOTICE WITH PARTNERSHIP CONSENT.—The Secretary may, with the consent of the partnership, rescind any notice of a partnership adjustment mailed to such partnership. Any notice so rescinded shall not be treated as a notice of a partnership adjustment for purposes of this subchapter, and the taxpayer shall have no right to bring a proceeding under section 6234 with respect to such notice.

''SEC. 6232. ASSESSMENT, COLLECTION, AND PAYMENT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Any imputed underpayment shall be assessed and collected in the same manner as if it were a tax imposed for the adjustment year by subtitle A, except that in the case of an administrative adjustment request to which section 6227(b)(1) applies, the underpayment shall be paid when the request is filed.

''(b) LIMITATION ON ASSESSMENT.—Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, no assessment of a deficiency may be made (and no levy or proceeding in any court for the collection of any amount resulting from such adjustment may be made, begun or prosecuted) before—

''(1) the close of the 90th day after the day on which a notice of a final partnership adjustment was mailed, and

''(2) if a petition is filed under section 6234 with respect to such notice, the decision of the court has become final.

''(c) PREMATURE ACTION MAY BE ENJOINED.—Notwithstanding section 7421(a), any action which violates subsection (b) may be enjoined in the proper court, including the Tax Court. The Tax Court shall have no jurisdiction to enjoin any action under this subsection unless a timely petition has been filed under section 6234 and then only in respect of the adjustments that are the subject of such petition.

''(d) EXCEPTIONS TO RESTRICTIONS ON ADJUSTMENTS.—

''(1) ADJUSTMENTS ARISING OUT OF MATH OR CLERICAL ERRORS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.— If the partnership is notified that, on account of a mathematical or clerical error appearing on the partnership return, an adjustment to a item is required, rules similar to the rules of paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 6213(b) shall apply to such adjustment.

''(B) SPECIAL RULE.—If a partnership is a partner in another partnership, any adjustment on account of such partnership's failure to comply with the requirements of section 6222(a) with respect to its interest in such other partnership shall be treated as an adjustment referred to in subparagraph (A), except that paragraph (2) of section 6213(b) shall not apply to such adjustment.

''(2) PARTNERSHIP MAY WAIVE RESTRICTIONS.—The partnership may at any time (whether or not any notice of partnership adjustment has been issued), by a signed notice in writing filed with the Secretary, waive the restrictions provided in subsection (b) on the making of any partnership adjustment.

''(e) LIMIT WHERE NO PROCEEDING BEGUN.—If no proceeding under section 6234 is begun with respect to any notice of a final partnership adjustment during the 90-day period described in subsection (b) thereof, the amount for which the partnership is liable under section 6225 shall not exceed the amount determined in accordance with such notice.

''SEC. 6233. INTEREST AND PENALTIES.

''(a) INTEREST AND PENALTIES DETERMINED FROM REVIEWED YEAR.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except to the extent provided in section 6226(c), in the case of a partnership adjustment for a reviewed year—

''(A) interest shall be computed under paragraph (2), and

''(B) the partnership shall be liable for any penalty, addition to tax, or additional amount as provided in paragraph (3).

''(2) DETERMINATION OF AMOUNT OF INTEREST.—The interest computed under this paragraph with respect to any partnership adjustment is the interest which would be determined under chapter 67 for the period beginning on the day after the return due date for the reviewed year and ending on the return due date for the adjustment year (or, if earlier, the date payment of the imputed underpayment is made). Proper adjustments in the amount determined under the preceding sentence shall be made for adjustments required for partnership taxable years after the reviewed year and before the adjustment year by reason of such partnership adjustment.

''(3) PENALTIES.—Any penalty, addition to tax, or additional amount shall be determined at the partnership level as if such partnership had been an individual subject to tax under chapter 1 for the reviewed year and the imputed underpayment were an actual underpayment (or understatement) for such year.

''(b) INTEREST AND PENALTIES WITH RESPECT TO ADJUSTMENT YEAR RETURN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any failure to pay an imputed underpayment on the date prescribed therefor, the partnership shall be liable—

''(A) for interest as determined under paragraph (2), and

''(B) for any penalty, addition to tax, or additional amount as determined under paragraph (3).

''(2) INTEREST.—Interest determined under this paragraph is the interest that would be determined by treating the imputed underpayment as an underpayment of tax imposed in the adjustment year.

''(3) PENALTIES.—Penalties, additions to tax, or additional amounts determined under

this paragraph are the penalties, additions to tax, or additional amounts that would be determined—

''(A) by applying section 6651(a)(2) to such failure to pay, and

''(B) by treating the imputed underpayment as an underpayment of tax for purposes of part II of subchapter A of chapter 68.

''SEC. 6234. JUDICIAL REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Within 90 days after the date on which a notice of a final partnership adjustment is mailed under section 6231 with respect to any partnership taxable year, the partnership may file a petition for a readjustment for such taxable year with—

''(1) the Tax Court,

''(2) the district court of the United States for the district in which the partnership's principal place of business is located, or

''(3) the Claims Court.

''(b) JURISDICTIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR BRINGING ACTION IN DISTRICT COURT OR CLAIMS COURT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A readjustment petition under this section may be filed in a district court of the United States or the Claims Court only if the partnership filing the petition deposits with the Secretary, on or before the date the petition is filed, the amount of the imputed underpayment (as of the date of the filing of the petition) if the partnership adjustment was made as provided by the notice of final partnership adjustment. The court may by order provide that the jurisdictional requirements of this paragraph are satisfied where there has been a good faith attempt to satisfy such requirement and any shortfall of the amount required to be deposited is timely corrected.

''(2) INTEREST PAYABLE.—Any amount deposited under paragraph (1), while deposited, shall not be treated as a payment of tax for purposes of this title (other than chapter 67).

''(c) SCOPE OF JUDICIAL REVIEW.—A court with which a petition is filed in accordance with this section shall have jurisdiction to determine all items of income, gain, loss, deduction, or credit of the partnership for the partnership taxable year to which the notice of final partnership adjustment relates, the proper allocation of such items among the partners, and the applicability of any penalty, addition to tax, or additional amount for which the partnership may be liable under this subchapter.

''(d) DETERMINATION OF COURT REVIEWABLE.—Any determination by a court under this section shall have the force and effect of a decision of the Tax Court or a final judgment or decree of the district court or the Claims Court, as the case may be, and shall be reviewable as such. The date of any such determination shall be treated as being the date of the court's order entering the decision.

''(e) EFFECT OF DECISION DISMISSING ACTION.—If an action brought under this section is dismissed other than by reason of a rescission under section 6231(c), the decision of the court dismissing the action shall be considered as its decision that the notice of final partnership adjustment is correct, and an appropriate order shall be entered in the records of the court.

''SEC. 6235. PERIOD OF LIMITATIONS ON MAKING ADJUSTMENTS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in this section, no adjustment under this subpart for any partnership taxable year may be made after the later of—

''(1) the date which is 3 years after the latest of—

''(A) the date on which the partnership return for such taxable year was filed,

''(B) the return due date for the taxable year, or

''(C) the date on which the partnership filed an administrative adjustment request with respect to such year under section 6227, or

''(2) in the case of any modification of an imputed underpayment under section 6225(c), the date that is 270 days (plus the number of days of any extension consented to by the Secretary under paragraph (4) thereof) after the date on which everything required to be submitted to the Secretary pursuant to such section is so submitted, or

''(3) in the case of any notice of a proposed partnership adjustment under section 6231(a)(2), the date that is 270 days after the date of such notice.

''(b) EXTENSION BY AGREEMENT.—The period described in subsection (a) (including an extension period under this subsection) may be extended by an agreement entered into by the Secretary and the partnership before the expiration of such period.

''(c) SPECIAL RULE IN CASE OF FRAUD, ETC.—

''(1) FALSE RETURN.—In the case of a false or fraudulent partnership return with intent to evade tax, the adjustment may be made at any time.

''(2) SUBSTANTIAL OMISSION OF INCOME.—If any partnership omits from gross income an amount properly includible therein and such amount is described in section 6501(e)(1)(A), subsection (a) shall be applied by substituting '6 years' for '3 years'.

''(3) NO RETURN.—In the case of a failure by a partnership to file a return for any taxable year, the adjustment may be made at any time.

''(4) RETURN FILED BY SECRETARY.—For purposes of this section, a return executed by the Secretary under subsection (b) of section 6020 on behalf of the partnership shall not be treated as a return of the partnership.

''(d) SUSPENSION WHEN SECRETARY MAILS NOTICE OF ADJUSTMENT.—If notice of a final partnership adjustment with respect to any taxable year is mailed under section 6231, the running of the period specified in subsection (a) (as modified by the other provisions of this section) shall be suspended—

''(1) for the period during which an action may be brought under section 6234 (and, if a petition is filed under such section with respect to such notice, until the decision of the court becomes final), and

''(2) for 1 year thereafter.

''PART 2—DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL RULES

''Sec. 6241. Definitions and special rules.

''SEC. 6241. DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL RULES.

''For purposes of this subchapter—

''(1) PARTNERSHIP.—The term 'partnership' means any partnership required to file a return under section 6031(a).

''(2) PARTNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT.—The term 'partnership adjustment' means any adjustment in the amount of any item of income, gain, loss, deduction, or credit of a partnership, or any partner's distributive share thereof.

''(3) RETURN DUE DATE.—The term 'return due date' means, with respect to the taxable year, the date prescribed for filing the partnership return for such taxable year (determined without regard to extensions).

''(4) PAYMENTS NONDEDUCTIBLE.—No deduction shall be allowed under subtitle A for any payment required to be made by a partnership under this subchapter.

''(5) PARTNERSHIPS HAVING PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS OUTSIDE UNITED STATES.—For purposes of sections 6234, a principal place of business located outside the United States shall be treated as located in the District of Columbia.

''(6) PARTNERSHIPS IN CASES UNDER TITLE 11 OF UNITED STATES CODE.—

''(A) SUSPENSION OF PERIOD OF LIMITATIONS ON MAKING ADJUSTMENT, ASSESSMENT, OR COLLECTION.—The running of any period of limitations provided in this subchapter on making a partnership adjustment (or provided by section 6501 or 6502 on the assessment or collection of any imputed underpayment determined under this subchapter) shall, in a case under title 11 of the United States Code, be suspended during the period during which the Secretary is prohibited by reason of such case from making the adjustment (or assessment or collection) and—

''(i) for adjustment or assessment, 60 days thereafter, and

''(ii) for collection, 6 months thereafter.

A rule similar to the rule of section 6213(f)(2) shall apply for purposes of section 6232(b).

''(B) SUSPENSION OF PERIOD OF LIMITATION FOR FILING FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW.—The running of the period specified in section 6234 shall, in a case under title 11 of the United States Code, be suspended during the period during which the partnership is prohibited by reason of such case from filing a petition under section 6234 and for 60 days thereafter.

''(7) TREATMENT WHERE PARTNERSHIP CEASES TO EXIST.—If a partnership ceases to exist before a partnership adjustment under this subchapter takes effect, such adjustment shall be taken into account by the former partners of such partnership under regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

''(8) EXTENSION TO ENTITIES FILING PARTNERSHIP RETURN.—If a partnership return is filed by an entity for a taxable year but it is determined that the entity is not a partnership (or that there is no entity) for such year, then, to the extent provided in regulations, the provisions of this subchapter are hereby extended in respect of such year to such entity and its items and to persons holding an interest in such entity.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of subchapters for chapter 63 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by the preceding provisions of this section, is amended by inserting after the item relating to subchapter B the following new item:

''SUBCHAPTER C. TREATMENT OF PARTNERSHIPS.''.

(d) BINDING NATURE OF PARTNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT PROCEEDINGS.—Section 6330(c)(4) of such Code is amended by striking ''or'' at the end of subparagraph (A), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting ''; or'', and by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following new subparagraph:

''(C) a final determination has been made with respect to such issue in a proceeding brought under subchapter C of chapter 63.''.

(e) RESTRICTION ON AUTHORITY TO AMEND PARTNER INFORMATION STATEMENTS.—Section 6031(b) of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following: ''Except as provided in the procedures under section 6225(c), with respect to statements under section 6226, or as otherwise provided by the Secretary, information required to be furnished by the partnership under this subsection may not be amended after the due date of the return under subsection (a) to which such information relates.''.

(f) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 6031(b) of such Code is amended by striking the last sentence.

(2) Section 6422 of such Code is amended by striking paragraph (12).

(3) Section 6501(n) of such Code is amended by striking paragraphs (2) and (3) and by striking ''CROSS REFERENCES'' and all that follows through ''For period of limitations'' and inserting ''CROSS REFERENCE.—For period of limitations''.

(4) Section 6503(a)(1) of such Code is amended by striking ''(or section 6229'' and all that follows through ''of section 6230(a))''.

(5) Section 6504 of such Code is amended by striking paragraph (11).

(6) Section 6511 of such Code is amended by striking subsection (g).

(7) Section 6512(b)(3) of such Code is amended by striking the second sentence.

(8) Section 6515 of such Code is amended by striking paragraph (6).

(9) Section 6601(c) of such Code is amended by striking the last sentence.

(10) Section 7421(a) of such Code is amended by striking ''6225(b), 6246(b)'' and inserting ''6232(c)''.

(11) Section 7422 of such Code is amended by striking subsection (h).

(12) Section 7459(c) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 6226'' and all that follows through ''or 6252'' and inserting ''section 6234''.

(13) Section 7482(b)(1) of such Code is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (E), by striking ''section 6226, 6228, 6247, or 6252'' and inserting ''section 6234'',

(B) by striking subparagraph (F), by striking ''or'' at the end of subparagraph (E) and inserting a period, and by inserting ''or'' at the end of subparagraph (D), and

(C) in the last sentence, by striking ''section 6226, 6228(a), or 6234(c)'' and inserting ''section 6234''.

(14) Section 7485(b) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 6226, 6228(a), 6247, or 6252'' and inserting ''section 6234''.

(g) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the amendments made by this section shall apply to returns filed for partnership taxable years beginning after December 31, 2017.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENT REQUESTS.—In the case of administrative adjustment request under section 6227 of such Code, the amendments made by this section shall apply to requests with respect to returns filed for partnership taxable years beginning after December 31, 2017.

(3) ADJUSTED PARTNERS STATEMENTS.—In the case of a partnership electing the application of section 6226 of such Code, the amendments made by this section shall apply to elections with respect to returns filed for partnership taxable years beginning after December 31, 2017.

(4) ELECTION.—A partnership may elect (at such time and in such form and manner as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe) for the amendments made by this section (other than the election under section 6221(b) of such Code (as added by this Act)) to apply to any return of the partnership filed for partnership taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act and before January 1, 2018.

SEC. 1102. PARTNERSHIP INTERESTS CREATED BY GIFT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 761(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following: ''In the case of a capital interest in a partnership in which capital is a material income-producing factor, whether a person is a partner with respect to such interest shall be determined without regard to whether such interest was derived by gift from any other person.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 704(e) of such Code is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (1) and by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (1) and (2), respectively,

(2) by striking ''this section'' in paragraph (2) (as so redesignated) and inserting ''this subsection'', and

(3) by striking ''FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS'' in the heading and inserting ''PARTNERSHIP INTERESTS CREATED BY GIFT''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to partnership taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

TITLE XII—DESIGNATION OF SMALL HOUSE ROTUNDA

SEC. 1201. DESIGNATING SMALL HOUSE ROTUNDA AS "FREEDOM FOYER".

The first floor of the area of the House of Representatives wing of the United States Capitol known as the small House rotunda is designated the ''Freedom Foyer''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 495, the motion shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the majority leader and the minority leader or their designees.

The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the further consideration of H.R. 1314, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to present the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314, the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015, an agreement that helps advance this Nation toward our goals of fiscal stability, strong national security, and entitlement reform.

These are goals that we have been advocating for years, ones that will secure significant long-term savings, provide our economy with the certainty needed to grow and prosper, and ensure the readiness of our military to meet current and emerging threats.

First, this agreement prevents the economic damage of a default, which could happen as early as next week, by suspending the debt limit through March 2017.

Next, the agreement includes the first significant reform to Social Security since 1983. These structural reforms will help maintain the solvency of vital Social Security trust funds by closing loopholes, increasing program integrity, and cracking down on fraud, resulting in $168 billion in long-term savings. The agreement also finds savings in other mandatory programs, including over $30 billion in Medicare entitlement savings.

As I have said many, many times before—and I have heard it said many times by others here on the floor—mandatory and entitlement programs make up two-thirds of the Nation's budget and are the primary drivers of our deficits and our debt. In fact, we have saved $195 billion on discretionary spending in these last 4 years. In the meantime, the entitlement-mandatory side of the budget continues to zoom skyward.

Reforms to these programs are necessary and overdue, and I hope that this bill today paves the way for additional action in the future.

This bill also repeals a flawed provision of the President's healthcare law, eliminating the automatic enrollment mandate that forces workers into employer-sponsored healthcare coverage that they may not want or need.

Finally—and, in my opinion, most importantly—this agreement provides for new top-line spending caps for the next 2 years. This will roll back the harmful, automatic, meat-ax approach of sequestration cuts which gut important Federal programs and slice the good with the bad, including slicing into our military strength.

A 2-year plan, why is that so important? Well, it provides much-needed certainty to the appropriations process and to the Defense Department and all the other agencies of the government, ensuring our ability to make thoughtful, responsible funding decisions over that time.

Having established agreed-upon, top-line numbers for both fiscal 2016 and 2017 will allow Congress to do its work on behalf of the American people and avoid a harmful government shutdown or the threat thereof. This is particularly crucial when it comes to our national security. It provides the Pentagon with the certainty needed to plan for the future, maintain readiness, and provide for our troops.

These adjustments are fully offset by mandatory spending cuts and other savings, not through tax increases, as the administration proposed in its budget submission earlier this year.

These new levels do not undermine our remarkable success in limiting Federal discretionary spending. Since 2011, as I have said before, we have reduced discretionary spending—that is what we appropriate here on the floor—by $175 billion. We remain on track to save taxpayers more than $2 trillion if you extrapolate those numbers through 2024.

With passage of this important agreement, my committee stands ready, coiled, poised to implement the details of this deal, going line by line through budgets and making the tough, but necessary, decisions to fund the entire government in a responsible way.

We will begin work with our Senate counterparts as soon as this bill is signed.

We have our eye on the December 11 deadline, and it is my goal to complete our appropriations work ahead of that date to avoid any more delays, continuing resolutions, or shutdown showdowns that hurt important Federal programs, our economy, and, coincidentally, the trust of the people in the Congress.

I want to thank and commend our leaders for their courage, their tenacity, and their resolve. While I know that this deal is not perfect, there are things I would change if I had the chance. The process by which it emerged is less than ideal. I believe, still, it is in the best interest of the country that we move forward with this arrangement.

This agreement takes steps in the right direction, from finding savings in our entitlement programs to protecting our economy from a dangerous default, to providing for the future of the Nation through funding certainty.

These are goals that I believe we can all get behind. So I ask my colleagues to support this bipartisan agreement today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1545

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I want to start by joining the comments of the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, Mr. ROGERS, in congratulating all those who came together to iron out their differences and produce this agreement.

It is not a perfect agreement, but it is far better than the alternative, the alternative which we would have seen which would have produced great damage to the economy, as opposed to this agreement, which will help boost economic growth and make important national investments.

What a difference a week makes, Madam Speaker. Just last week, we had on the floor of this House a bill that would have jeopardized the full faith and credit of the United States. It was a piece of legislation that says the United States Government only has to pay some of its bills, doesn't have to pay all of its bills. That would have been an awful precedent that would have put the economy at risk.

Even worse, it said, well, when we decide which bills we are going to pay, we are first going to pay all the bondholders, like China and the folks on Wall Street, rather than our soldiers and our veterans and the doctors who provide Medicare to our seniors. I am glad we have gotten beyond that, Madam Speaker.

This will ensure the full faith and credit of the United States. It will also lift the very damaging sequester caps that have been put in place that, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, were going to slow down economic growth over the next couple years.

Instead, we are going to be able to make some vital investments in key areas: in education, in scientific research, in transportation, and in military readiness. Now, I know those decisions are going to be left to Mr. ROGERS and the appropriators, and I wish them all the best in making those decisions. I hope we come back by mid-December with an agreement to go forward without further threats of government shutdown.

This agreement at least provides the room and space to make those important investments. It also prevents a looming 20 percent cut in Social Security disability benefits and provides that reassurance to millions of Americans who otherwise would have been on the edge.

It prevents what would have been a whopping increase in Medicare part B premiums for millions of seniors around this country, who would have been stretched extremely thin and probably not been able to make all their payments—whether they were mortgage payments, rent payments, or food payments—at the same time they were facing those huge Medicare part B premium increases. So that was addressed as well.

Now, like Mr. ROGERS, there are lots of things that I would like to have seen in this bill that are not included; but on balance, this is an important step forward, certainly a great improvement over where we were just a week ago.

So, again, I want to express my gratitude to everybody who helped make this possible.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), the distinguished chairman of the House Committee on Rules.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, last night in the Committee on Rules we looked at this bill. We talked about it and its importance to the Nation.

Madam Speaker, first let me say that this is an agreement between the White House, the Senate, and the House. This is an agreement that we can move forward on and avoid many destructive things that might have happened not only to the American people and the economy, but, really, our own credibility. Our ability to work together at this very careful time is important so that we show the American people that this can happen.

There are a lot of things that I agree and disagree with that were said. First of all, harm the economy? Good gosh, when you only have a 1 percent GDP growth, the President has already done that with massive tax increases. The President has done that with rules and regulations. We are trying to make sure that what we are doing in this bill is to stick to the Republican plan.

What is the Republican plan? It has been—going into our sixth year—that we are going to hold government spending flat. We do that essentially not only with a CR, which we will do again in a few weeks, but through effective use of sequestration. What we have done is been able to take the sequestration dollars and to utilize them in such a way that, as the chairman was speaking about, we are pulling in mandatory spending.

We believe, after 5 years of staying flat with government spending, that we are in a more dangerous world than ever, and our military must have more money, our security operations must have more money. What we are going to do is to look at the entire process, come up with an idea about bringing in more money that funds our security, that funds our military, and offsets that so that we can do this by looking at long-term mandatory spending that will bring in over 170 billion dollars' worth of savings over the mirror that we look at, over the timeframe that is important for the American people to have confidence that we will not bankrupt this country and that we can continue.

Now, the bottom line to this whole exercise is that what we have done is worked together. Working together, we now have a plan to move forward; and we will simply go to the next exercise, and that is funding the government for the year.

The Republican plan is simple. We are not going to give this government one extra penny to put us into a bankruptcy circumstance, but we are asking also, back, that the President of the United States give us an opportunity to grow our economy. Taxes are too high, and we have too many rules and regulations; but the Republican Party will stick to our plan, and that is what we are doing here.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

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

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, first and foremost, this bill takes the important step of protecting the full faith and credit of the United States. We will pay our obligations—and not only to foreign bondholders, but to our citizens, whether veterans or our children—unlike the Republican majority bill last week.

It protects millions of seniors from a 50 percent increase in their monthly Medicare part B premiums and spreads out the cost of paying for the fix over a number of years. It ensures that all 11 million Americans that rely on Social Security disability insurance won't see their benefits cut by 20 percent. It is fiscally responsible, while not undermining or changing the structure of vital programs in any way.

Let me repeat that. It is fiscally responsible, while not undermining or changing the structure of vital programs in any way.

It ensures, in Social Security, a uniform national process for disability evaluations, and it closes a loophole used mostly by higher income individuals to receive higher Social Security benefits than intended. It regularizes payments in Medicare for care given in outpatient facilities.

Finally, the agreement raises the spending caps for 2 years for domestic

spending, not only for defense priorities, as some have earlier proposed. I just want to repeat that so it is clear. The agreement raises the spending caps for 2 years for both domestic and defense spending. That means we can better fund critical domestic programs that were cut under sequestration, increasing support for education, health research, food safety, job training, and health care for veterans.

This was a product of a lot of effort, of Members, of staff in various committees, the leadership on a bipartisan basis working with the administration. I just want to leave expressing my support and expressing we will truly have a broad, bipartisan vote for this bill today.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN), the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Defense of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Madam Speaker, I will be brief.

I rise in support of the agreement before us this afternoon.

Madam Speaker, as my colleagues are aware, the Department of Defense and the intelligence community have borne the brunt of our efforts to reduce the budget deficit and control our burgeoning national debt. Under the Budget Control Act of 2011, roughly half of all the discretionary spending reductions were taken from programs in the national security area.

My colleagues, 2011 was a different time. The security environment has changed significantly. Since that time, threats from terrorist groups and nation-states have risen dramatically. The security spending reductions envisioned 4 years ago seem extremely unwise and dangerous today.

In this agreement, the Department of Defense will receive additional resources, badly needed resources: $30 billion this year, and $15 billion next year. But almost more important, this agreement gives the Pentagon and our intelligence community predictability, certainty, the ability to organize and plan its activities for 2 years. It also gives our soldiers and their families a degree of certainty that they will be supported as they do the work of freedom.

Senior leaders of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines—and the Department itself—will now be able to plan as to how they will configure, equip, train, sustain, and deploy our forces in the most effective and efficient manner possible. This ability will result in budget savings and a more effective fighting force.

Madam Speaker, this agreement is by no means perfect, but this agreement does require support because it provides predictable funding for our Nation's security at a time of changing and growing defense. Every Member ought to support it.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the great State of Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the very distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement.

I am very encouraged that this agreement includes provisions from my bill, H.R. 2391, the Medicaid Generic Drug Price Fairness Act, which I introduced back on May 18. My legislation requires generic drug manufacturers to provide rebates to Medicaid when they raise prices faster than the rate of inflation.

My legislation will help Americans get lifesaving prescriptions they need. It will save $1 billion over 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Just this morning, the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation issued a report finding that this issue, the skyrocketing prices of prescription drugs, is the number one healthcare priority for the American people. The report found that 77 percent of those surveyed, including Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, identified the issue as their top health concern overall.

This legislation is a strong and welcome step to help keep drugs affordable, but we must do more. We need to investigate drug companies that are taking advantage of the American people by jacking up their prices just to boost corporate profits and make their executives rich.

Over the past month, press reports have been filled with almost daily accounts of drug company executives trying to justify the obscene price increases while lining their pockets. My colleagues may have heard about the so-called ''pharma bro'' Martin Shkreli, who increased the price of a drug that treats life-threatening infections from about $14 to $750 overnight. He then called his price gouging ''a great thing for society.''

My colleagues also may have heard about Michael Pearson, the CEO of Valeant Pharmaceuticals, which increased the prices of two drugs used to treat heart failure and hypertension by 212 percent and 525 percent on the same day it acquired them. This company is currently obstructing congressional oversight and refusing to provide documents relating to its increases.

I am very pleased to support this budget bill, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of it.

□ 1600

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY), the distinguished chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Madam Speaker, if one takes into account the effects of inflation, we cut our military budget 21 percent from 2010 to 2014.

Madam Speaker, I think everybody in this body will acknowledge the world is not 21 percent safer today than it was just 4 years ago.

As a matter of fact, if you look around the world, whether it is the growth of ISIS into more countries or the continued challenge of al Qaeda and its various affiliates, to the morass of Syria with historic Russian re-insertion today, to China building islands in the South Pacific, to North Korea's saber rattling, to Iran intentionally violating an agreement it made on its missile testing just after the U.S. ratified the nuclear deal, to daily cyber attacks, the world is growing increasingly dangerous.

Into that danger we send men and women who wear the uniform of the United States to meet that danger. Yet, we cut their budget 21 percent.

We saw last week the President of the United States used them as a political bargaining chip to try to force Congress to comply with his domestic agenda.

The bottom line for me, Madam Speaker, is our troops deserve better than that. That is the reason I support this Bipartisan Budget Act of 2014. It stops the cuts in defense.

It increases the money going to our troops. It prevents them from being used as a bargaining chip in the future because it sets the military budget for fiscal year 2016 and fiscal year 2017 so that that is decided. They can't be used as leverage for some other agenda. I think that is the sort of stability and predictability they need and that they deserve.

I think the great question, Madam Speaker, is: If not this, then what?

We know that this budget agreement at least comes close to meeting what the President has asked for on defense and comes close to the Congressional budget, within $5 billion.

Now, that is not enough money to repair all the damage that has been done over the past 5 years, but it is in the ball park. If we do not approve this budget, then what?

Well, then we are back to continuing resolutions and sequester, which means, for example, the Army has said they will have to cut another 40,000 troops out of their ranks on top of the 70,000 they have already cut.

Now, that is just a sampling of what not passing this bill could well mean. If we go back to CRs and the sequester level, it would be drastic reductions to the military, a much less safe world for the United States and its interests.

I believe that this measure, on that basis alone, deserves our support.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I agree with the gentleman that the investments in military readiness are important. I also believe the investments to help our economy grow and invest in education and scientific research are important.

What the President said to the Congress is what the vast majority of the American public believed, that it is

vital to have a strong national defense. But a strong national defense requires a strong economy. It requires an educated workforce. It requires investments in innovation and technology. It requires a 21st century infrastructure.

So I am pleased that the President insisted that we make investments not just in the military, but also vital investments to help the economy grow, grow more jobs, which are estimated to be in the range of 350,000 in 2016 alone. So those are vital investments that also help strengthen America.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), somebody who has been on the front lines of making those important investments for our country, the very distinguished ranking member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mrs. LOWEY. Madam Speaker, as ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, I rise to support this bipartisan legislation that ensures the full faith and credit of the United States and sets a path to a responsible appropriations process this year and next.

Since the beginning of this year's appropriations process, Democrats have called for relief from damaging, austerity-level budget caps so Congress can invest in our Nation's future.

Unfortunately, the majority's budget resolution and appropriation bills would have strangled economic growth and not met our Nation's needs with cuts to Pell Grants that help families pay college tuition and law enforcement grants, for example. The list goes on and on.

From the start of the appropriations process, I urged my majority colleagues to negotiate reasonable spending caps that protect our economy and national priorities.

I am pleased these talks finally happened and resulted in this bipartisan package that provides an additional $40 billion for defense, $40 billion for nondefense, over 2 years. These investments are critical.

Upon its passage, I look forward to working together in a similarly responsible manner to reach bipartisan consensus on the spending bills to avoid a government shutdown in mid-December.

I urge passage of this bill so we can immediately begin our appropriations work, already overdue.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, may I inquire of the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Kentucky has 15½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Maryland has 19 minutes remaining.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I thank the chairman.

Madam Speaker, I, in essence, only want to make four brief points. Number one is that, I, too, have concerns with lots of parts of this bill. There are parts that I wish were different. I think all of us do. But there are a number of reasons why I think it is important that we move forward on this legislation.

Number one, this helps avoid a devastating hit to senior citizens in the district that I represent and, frankly, senior citizens across the entire country that deserve to be protected by those of us that represent them up here in Washington.

Number two, when we are able to move forward on the appropriations process, which this legislation will allow us to do, that is a way that allows every Member of this House to have input. Every Member of this House has been part of that process.

So for those of us who believe in regular order and inclusiveness and in making sure that every Member has a word and a say as to how we move forward, this bill will allow us to move forward on that very open process.

Lastly—and we have heard this before—it is no secret that the world has gotten a lot more dangerous, and you have heard the numbers. We are devastating our military at a time when we are asking them to do more and more and when the world is becoming more and more dangerous.

So let me just leave with this last, final point. Are we going to allow our military to continue to receive cuts at a time when they should actually be helped and should actually have increased spending or are we going to permit the devastating of our men and women in uniform, of the U.S. military, at this time in our history?

My dear friends, I, for one, am not going to sit back, if I can do anything about it, and allow the U.S. military to be devastated by more budget cuts.

So, therefore, I respectfully urge a ''yes'' vote on this legislation.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON), a distinguished member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time.

I plan on voting for this bill, but I am not here to pound and celebrate that.

It does things that are good. It lifts the debt ceiling and puts us in a position where we don't have to fear defaulting on America's debts. It avoids ruinous cuts in Medicare part B, and disability insurance benefit cuts won't go down.

But the fact is no one here, no one in this room, can say that this piece of legislation that we are looking at now is going to advance America, bring us progress that we actually really need.

Do you know that, since 2012, we have seen 640 fewer National Institutes of Health grants? We haven't been making the investments we need in embassy security, housing, health care, education. We are not advancing America.

This is not a progress budget. This is a survival budget. And we need to survive; so, I'm going to vote for this piece of legislation.

But we must come to the moment in time when we are looking to advance our country, to move forward and offer real leadership to the world, rather than just obsessing over how much we can cut and how much we can take.

The fact is that the Progressive Caucus offered a budget. It meets our minimal conditions, but it doesn't advance our real progress that we need.

We have principles that we have been talking about that are about pushing this country forward: child nutrition, affordable care, college education, housing, transit. This is what is going to make our country strong.

This budget keeps us above water, keeps us from defaulting on our debts, and that is a good thing. But can't we do more?

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA).

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I am a member of the majority.

When the majority brings a bill to the floor, you normally start off with ''yes'' and hope to stay there. In this case, I started off with ''likely'' and didn't arrive at a ''yes.'' So, reluctantly, I am going to vote ''no'' on this bill.

I am not going to vote ''no'' because of what it seeks to do. I am certainly not going to vote ''no'' knowing that we need to fund our troops in the field in a war that has dragged on for 15 years and now has re-ignited.

But I am going to vote ''no'' because of how this bill is paid for. I have done as much as I can as long as I can to tolerate how we ''score'' things.

At the risk of being wrong, I will remind people that I am only as good as the information that my staff has given me. But according to CBO, $2.5 billion worth of this pay-for comes from premium payments that are accelerated, meaning we are robbing from the future to pay for today.

Another one comes from extended pension smoothing, $9 billion. This is a time-shifting on money over 10 years. Again, we are robbing from the future to pay for this year.

Another one, $4 billion, comes from Social Security disability. But it is a double count. It has already been scored elsewhere previously.

And $5 billion comes from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. This will be the third time this year that we have brought a bill saying we are going to sell this oil at its low price.

Ultimately, the real question is: Aren't we selling off an asset today to pay for current expenses?

$3.5 billion will come from FCC bandwidth sales. I can live with that. I'm not thrilled with it. I think we should make more bandwidth available to the public so that, in fact, space we can all use without paying would be available.

But here is the one that really broke me: Extending the Medicare sequester

rate saves $14 billion, but the one-time saving is based on an occurrence in the year 2025.

So, in closing, Madam Speaker, I will not sell our future for this year's budget; and, therefore, I recommend a ''no'' because of the pay-fors on this budget.

□ 1615

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH), somebody who has been very focused on making sure we keep the full faith and credit of the United States.

Mr. WELCH. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, there are a few reasons why this agreement deserves our support:

First, it is good public policy. This finally unleashes the shackles of the sequester that have prevented Congress from making decisions and, instead, just had across-the-board cuts. The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) is going to have an opportunity for his Appropriations Committee—Republicans and Democrats—to do its job.

Second, it averts enormous increases in Medicare part B premiums.

Third, it keeps Social Security disability funds solvent through 2022, and there are a number of other things.

The second major reason why this is so important is this: It is an agreement. We have finally come together, through the leadership of Speaker BOEHNER and Leader PELOSI, to legislate. We have been part of a legislative body that is on strike, that hasn't legislated. We cannot underestimate the power that is unleashed by the capacity of this Congress to give certainty to the American people and to our agencies as to what comes ahead and what they have to do.

Secondly, what Speaker BOEHNER did—and I am so indebted to him, as all of us should be—is that he took out of the hands of those of us in Congress two weapons which, when used, are very destructive, and those are: the threat of shutting the government down, and the threat of defaulting on America's full faith and credit. We can't do that.

And Speaker BOEHNER, to his credit, when there was the Planned Parenthood dispute about funding and he was in favor of cutting funding, he opposed shutting down government to achieve that goal.

We have suspended the debt ceiling through 2017, which means this body is going to have not just the opportunity, but the responsibility to do its job.

Finally, what we have seen here, when Speaker BOEHNER reached out to Leader PELOSI, is that he had in the minority leader a willing partner who was willing to sit down, work hard, and reach an agreement. That sets the foundation for progress ahead.

I wish the best success to Speaker-to-be RYAN. He has willing and able partners in the whole Caucus to make progress for America.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD), the distinguished former Governor of South Carolina, who is a Member of this great body.

Mr. SANFORD. Madam Speaker, I will say to the chairman from Kentucky that I am absolutely sympathetic in the way that he and others in the leadership are really caught between a rock and a hard place.

If you think about 100 members of the defense community saying, ''Wait a minute. We won't vote for it unless we get more there''; folks in the AG community saying, ''We don't like this particular provision''; advocates of Medicare saying, ''We have got to have a bit more here,'' the realities of a debt ceiling, a President who said, ''A clean ceiling or nothing at all,'' I mean, they really have been between a rock and a hard place.

But that having been said, we are still left at the end of the day with a $1.5 trillion problem that has grown on top of an $18 trillion problem; and I, therefore, believe that the simple notion is the key to getting out of a hole is to quit digging. Fundamentally, I believe that this bill does more digging than not. And I say that from three different points:

One, there is a process question. In fairness to the chairman and others, in some ways, this was handed to them, and I think that there are serious questions that any of us should have with regard to process.

Two, it does remove the caps. As draconian as they are, they represent the only piece of financial restraint in Washington, D.C., that has encumbered this entity. That, I think, has a lot to do with the fiscal restraint that we have seen on domestic discretionary spending.

And finally, as my colleague from California just pointed out, there is borrowing from Peter to pay for Paul. And if you look at where disability insurance is getting money from the standpoint of old age survivors, if you look at the bandwidth question, if you look at the strategic oil question, if you look at pension smoothing and a whole number of other areas, you are left with this larger question of this still does not solve the problem of this upward trajectory that we have with regard to spending in this place.

Therefore, I would remind everyone of what Admiral Mike Mullen said, who is the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He said that the greatest threat to our civilization was the national debt. At the end of the day, this bill compounds it; and for that reason, I would respectfully encourage a ''no.''

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL), a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. NEAL. Madam Speaker, today's effort is a moment of satisfaction but not delectation. This stands before us as a testament that Congress cannot be dictated to by a minority of the majority. This institution cannot work based upon the principle that a minority of the majority can dictate the outcome of legislative life.

I am glad we are finding common ground and common purpose. It is similar to the Congress that I joined a lot of years ago.

But rather than a moment of gloating, we should all take a look at what has happened to the process that once governed this institution. And my plea to the new Speaker of the House is going to be: Remember that the committee system is the vertebra of Congress. It is within the structure of the committee system that we find the way forward.

And to Speaker BOEHNER, a good man and a good friend who leaves here in the next couple of days, congratulations, as well as to Leader PELOSI, Leader MCCONNELL, and Leader REID. But the sad commentary is this could never have happened if they didn't take it upon themselves to do the actual negotiation. The polarization in this institution would have prevented that.

We cannot keep taking America to the financial precipice. We need some predictability, some confidence in building the economy. By embracing this proposal, we allow that opportunity to perhaps happen. We take default off the table. The full faith and credit of the United States will not be impugned. We will not allow the country to be hijacked by extremist views.

I say to those here, that small number that want to dictate the outcome of what happens in this institution: Pay some attention to the skill and the art of legislating as opposed to just the talking points that lend themselves to the incendiary commentary that flows from this institution now. Work with both sides to try to find an outcome that the American people can look at as having accomplished with some pride.

We look at this institution with great regard, and what has happened to it is a shameful exercise in allowing this rule that prevents us from moving forward because of the advances that are made by a minority of the majority.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy and his hard work over the years on the budget.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to support this agreement. It allows us to limp along. There is no shutdown for now. We avoid the damage of default. There is a slight relaxation in sequestration. There is equity for seniors and the disabled.

There was a time when many of these provisions would not necessarily be a cause for celebration, but it is today.

This is a signal accomplishment for stability.

I take my hat off to Speaker BOEHNER, Leader PELOSI, the Senate leadership, and the President and his team for delivering an agreement that came together for Congress at relatively warp speed, working behind the scenes for days. It wins the House some breathing space, not lurching from crisis to crisis, and I hope that we take advantage of this achievement.

This was an important week here on Capitol Hill:

We have made a transition on the Republican side with a new Speaker, a friend that I respect and admire, the gentleman from Wisconsin, PAUL RYAN. I look forward to working with him.

It was important that the House was able to work its will on the Ex-Im Bank. We found a piece of legislation supported not just overwhelmingly by the House, but by a majority of Republicans, bottled up in committee by a minority, and it broke loose. I think that is important.

I hope this breathing room allows us to do one other thing, and that is to prioritize our budget requirements. We are going to spend over $1 trillion in the years ahead on nuclear weapons that we cannot afford to use and can't afford to buy. We can do better for the American people, and I hope this agreement allows us to do so.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH), a distinguished member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. FATTAH. Madam Speaker, I am one who comes to this floor to support this agreement. It means the great work that we are doing on the Appropriations Committee—working with my colleagues, like Chairman ROGERS and TOM COLE from Oklahoma—the work we are doing on brain health-related issues, the creation of a process to map the human brain, to create a national brain observatory, to help lead the world in an area in which we can finally find answers to a whole range of diseases going forward. We will be able to move our appropriations bills on a whole range of issues—from youth mentoring, to housing, to health care—because the Congress and its leadership have come together.

So I commend both sides, and I commend the White House. I am pleased that this agreement has happened.

Yesterday I announced a $10 million TIGER grant for Philadelphia. This agreement means that there will be other Members who will be making said announcements out in the future because we will be doing the work that helps keep America number one in the world.

For all of our challenges, we have the most powerful Nation in the world. This agreement helps to move us forward, and I am here to applaud it and to vote in favor of it.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), somebody who knows how to lead, who knows how to get things done, who knows how to find common ground, and who was a vital part of bringing us to the progress we are making today, the Democratic leader.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) for yielding and for his kind words, and I return the compliment to him.

To the staff of the Budget Committee, the staff of the other committees of jurisdiction on both sides of the aisle who enabled this important agreement to come forward, thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, today we are proud to come to the floor with legislation that moves America forward, affirming the full faith and credit of the United States of America, as our Constitution says should never be in doubt, and passing a budget agreement that creates jobs, protects seniors, and invests in our future.

Today we cast our votes for a bipartisan budget package that represents significant progress for hardworking American families.

Throughout the budget process, I am proud that Democrats have been united by our values and our determination to win progress for those hardworking American families. We showed we had the votes and the resolve to sustain the President's vetoes of funding bills that did not meet the needs of those people.

Working with our Republican colleagues on a compromise enabled us at long last to bring to the floor a bill, a bill with which we have broken the sequester stranglehold on our national defense and our investments in good-paying jobs and the future of America.

In this agreement before the House, we achieve equal funding; we honor the principle of parity between defense and domestic priorities. We achieve equal funding increases for defense and domestic initiatives, amounting to $112 billion over the next 2 years. We prevent a 20 percent cut in disability benefits for millions of people in 2016 and extend the solvency of the Social Security Disability Insurance program. We prevent a drastic increase in Medicare part B premiums and deductibles for millions of seniors next year. And we affirm the full faith and credit of the United States is nonnegotiable and unbreakable, with a clean debt limit suspension.

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We push through the gridlock to provide more economic certainty and, according to the Council of Economic Advisers, create an additional 340,000 jobs in 2016 alone.

Budget and senior groups and groups for disability are lining up in strong support of this agreement. As AARP wrote to congressional leaders—I'm sure you saw this, Mr. ROGERS, and thank you for your courageous support of this legislation, our great chairman of the Appropriations Committee—AARP wrote, ''AARP strongly supports the bipartisan agreement you have reached to avert deep reductions in Social Security Disability Insurance benefits in 2016, and to address the imminent spike in Medicare Part B premiums which many older Americans would otherwise experience. Your efforts to reach across the aisle and together find sensible solutions to significant problems are appreciated and commended.''

Working together, Madam Speaker, Democrats and Republicans, we have found a way forward for the American people. I thank the Republican leadership for their partnership in reaching this agreement.

Again, I thank the staffs of the committees of jurisdiction: the Budget Committee, the Ways and Means Committee, the Appropriations Committee, the Energy and Commerce Committee, and others. I commend our colleagues for speaking out on this important agreement.

Let us pass this agreement. Let's vote ''yes'' today together. Let us pass this agreement, move swiftly to keep government open, and make progress for the American people.

Madam Speaker, I urge a ''yes'' vote, and I hope it is a big strong one.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, might I inquire of the gentleman how many speakers he has remaining?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I have about four more speakers.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER). He is somebody who has been a key leader on budget and fiscal issues, someone from the great State of Maryland, and our distinguished Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentlelady.

I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding. I thank him for his outstanding leadership as ranking member of the Budget Committee on fiscal stability and fiscal responsibility and his willingness to lead in ensuring that America invests in its future.

I thank the chairman of the Appropriations Committee. I think I quote the chairman of the Appropriations Committee as much as I quote any other Member: Unrealistic and ill-advised. Those two words of his relating to the sequester are emblazoned on my frontal lobe, and I thank him for that statement.

Madam Speaker, this agreement represents a bipartisan effort to prevent a catastrophic default and lessen the chance of a government shutdown in December—lessens the chance. It doesn't preclude it. It shows what is possible when Democrats and Republicans work together to get something done in a bipartisan way.

This has been a unique week. The Export-Import Bank passed with a majority of Republicans and an overwhelmingly majority—all but one—of Democrats. This is going to pass, in my view, with overwhelming numbers of Republicans and overwhelming numbers of Democrats voting for it. That is what Americans want, and that is what they expect. They want us to work together, not always agree with one other, but to work together.

Madam Speaker, this bill replaces the sequester, that ill-advised policy that is hurting our country. It replaces it for 2 years and does so with parity for defense and non-defense sequester relief. It protects Medicare part B beneficiaries from seeing higher premiums, and it saves the Social Security Disability Insurance program from insolvency. All of those are worthwhile objectives.

This legislation will give us a chance to work on a long-term solution to our fiscal challenges over the next 2 years. This agreement, like Ryan-Murray, is a short-term agreement, and the end of it comes sooner than we expect.

Congress ought not to wait until this agreement is about to expire 2 years from now to act. We should get to work right now on a big, bipartisan deal to put America's fiscal house back in order and enable our Nation to afford investments in a stronger economic future.

Americans are not looking for a rickety bridge to 2017, but a sturdy one that can carry us into a stronger economic future. Businesses across the country are clamoring for long-term certainty, for Congress to find a way to replace the sequester and remove the uncertainty that it has created and continues to create.

So I hope, Madam Speaker, the history that is written about this legislation is that it was a bipartisan first step towards securing the kind of long-term agreement all of us know we must achieve.

I had the opportunity to serve with Mr. ROGERS for a couple of decades on the Appropriations Committee. He and I have served in this Congress together for a long period of time.

He is a responsible leader in the Congress of the United States, and I quote him because his perspective and mine are the same—although we differ on many issues—and it is that we owe it to the American people, we owe it to America, and we owe it to future generations to create the fiscal stability that will allow the Appropriations Committee, very frankly, to again become the center of decisionmaking, which it was for many of the years that I served on it.

Too often now we ignore the Appropriations Committee whose job is to set priorities and to apply the resources of our country to those priority items. If we don't adhere to that process, that will not happen.

Madam Speaker, in closing, we need to get a long-term fiscal resolution. This is a short term. I will support it. It is good for the country. But we need a long-term solution. I thank the chairman, and I thank the ranking member, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, my friend, who has done such a terrific job.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Ranking Member, let me thank you. And to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, let me thank you as well.

This was a tough call. And I do want to thank the leadership, Speaker BOEHNER, and our leadership, Leader PELOSI, Whip HOYER, and, of course, our ranking member of the Budget Committee, and the Ways and Means leadership as well. This is an important step forward because I can say to my constituents: We fixed some of your pain and your anguish.

Madam Speaker, this bill quickly provides $80 billion, but I am so grateful that part of that deals with the plussing up of non-defense discretionary funding: child care, National Institutes of Health, and other very important issues.

My seniors, I think it is very important to note that your Medicare premium part B will not go up in a 50 percent increase in 2016 and there will be less deep cuts in Social Security, more jobs being created, and as well we will have the opportunities, as I indicated, to increase NIH funding.

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

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 10 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. What we must be careful of is that we do not increase any mandatory minimums and some of the penalties that are in place, and we must be careful that we do protect Social Security and Medicare. We will continue to monitor this for a budget that will lift the debt ceiling until 2017 and have this country stand on its feet and pay its bills.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding and I rise to speak on the rule and the underlying legislation, which is the Senate Amendment to H.R. 1314, the ''Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015.''

The bill before us is not perfect—far from it—but it is a modest and positive step toward preventing Republicans from shutting down the government again and manufacturing crises that only harm our economy, destroy jobs, and weaken our middle class.

I have reviewed the agreement carefully and have concluded that on balance the good outweighs the bad for the following reasons:

1. The agreement provides $80 billion of significant sequester relief over the next two years for both defense and non-defense priorities, which is nearly 90 percent of the relief requested by the President in his 2016 budget;

2. The Bipartisan Budget Agreement prevents a roughly 50 percent increase in the Medicare Part B premium in 2016, protecting thousands of seniors in my congressional district, and millions more across the country, from cost increases;

3. The Bipartisan Budget Agreement avoids deep cuts to Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) benefits that would occur at the end of next year;

4. Hundreds of thousands of American jobs will be created over the next two years due to the avoidance of manufactured budget crises;

5. The Bipartisan Budget Agreement provides additional resources and the funding stability needed to protect our homeland, counter future threats, and take care of our troops while preventing deep cuts that would result from locking in sequestration;

6. The agreement is paid for in a balanced way that avoids harmful cuts to Medicare or Social Security beneficiaries; and

7. Prevents a catastrophic default and protects the full faith and credit of the United States and by suspending the national debt limit until March 15, 2017.

But as with any compromise there are some things in the agreement that I support and some things that I do not.

For example, while providing $80 billion in relief over two years, instead of abolishing sequestration, as I would prefer, the agreement retains the sequestration principle and extends its applicability for two additional years, until 2025.

Of this $80 billion, $50 billion will be available in FY 2016 and $30 billion in FY 2017, to be equally divided and allocated by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees among the various federal agencies and programs.

This modest increase in discretionary domestic funding holds open the promise of increased investments in critical areas such as basic research in health and science, education, veterans' medical care, and job training.

And these investments are desperately needed if we are to position our nation to prevail in an increasingly interconnected economy.

Madam Speaker, in the absence of this agreement, we would have to rely upon a full-year continuing resolution which would result in $1 billion less in NIH funding and nearly 1,000 fewer NSF grants than under the President's budget.

Were we to operate under a continuing resolution through the end of FY 2016, per-pupil education funding would fall to the lowest levels since 2000, and Head Start would be flat-funded, which would mean roughly 17,000 fewer children served than in 2014.

Madam Speaker, a full-year CR at sequestration levels would mean $1 billion less than the President requested for veterans' medical care relative even though all of us here agree that our veterans deserve more, much more, support than they have received.

The Bipartisan Budget Agreement will allow us to provide funding for job training for two million more workers than would be possible if we continued to operate through the end of FY 2016 under a continuing resolution subject to sequestration.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support the provision in the Bipartisan Budget Agreement that prevents an increase of nearly 50 percent in the Medicare Part B premium for 2016 and 2017 by spreading out the cost of replenishing

the Medicare Supplemental Medical Insurance Trust Fund over a number of years.

Without Congressional action, the monthly 2015 Part B premium of $104.90 would increase by $54.40 in 2016 to $159.30 for beneficiaries not held harmless (i.e., those who did not receive an increase in their Social Security benefits).

The Bipartisan Budget Agreement maintains the hold harmless provision in current law and prevents a dramatic premium increase on beneficiaries not held harmless by setting a new 2016 basic Part B premium for the beneficiaries not held harmless at $120, which is the amount the Part B premium would otherwise be for all beneficiaries in 2016 if the hold harmless provision in current law did not apply.

To replenish the Medicare Trust Fund, in 2016 there would be a loan of general revenue from the Federal Treasury, which will be repaid beginning in 2016 by an additional $3 surcharge in the monthly Part B premium of beneficiaries not subject to the hold harmless.

Madam Speaker, it is worth noting that a functioning, effective federal government is critical to people with disabilities who disproportionately rely on government services to live, learn and work in their communities.

That is why I also strongly support the provision in the Bipartisan Budget Agreement that avoids deep cuts to Social Security Disability Insurance.

Specifically, the agreement ensures that the Social Security Disability Insurance program will continue to provide the full benefits that workers have earned, preventing a 20 percent cut that would have been applied to workers and their families at the end of 2016.

Madam Speaker, another reason I support the Bipartisan Budget Agreement is that it eliminates the temptation of House Republicans to once again resort to the brinksmanship politics of defaulting on the national debt.

The full faith and credit of the United States is too valuable a national asset to be trifled with, as Alexander Hamilton, the nation's first and greatest Treasury Secretary, understood.

In 1789, in the dawn of the nation's birth, Hamilton recognized and acted upon the belief that the path to American prosperity and greatness lay in its creditworthiness which provided the affordable access to capital needed to fund internal improvements and economic growth.

According to Hamilton, the nation's creditworthiness was one of its most important national assets and ''the proper funding of the present debt, will render it a national blessing.''

But to maintain this blessing, or to ''render public credit immortal,'' Hamilton warned that it was necessary that ''the creation of debt should always be accompanied with the means of extinguishment.''

In other words, to retain and enjoy the prosperity that flows from good credit, it is necessary for a nation to pay its bills.

Defaulting on the national debt would vitiate the full faith and credit of the United States, cost American jobs, hurt businesses of all sizes, and do irreparable damage to the economy.

On the other hand, suspending the national debt until March 15, 2017, is estimated by the Congressional Budget Office to create 340,000 additional American jobs in 2016 alone and more than 500,000 job-years in 2017.

Additionally, the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors forecasts that the indirect effect of increased certainty and confidence could further boost job creation and economic growth above these estimates.

What is more, increased long-term growth and rising middle-class incomes can be expected to result from the greater investments in human capital and infrastructure made possible by the Bipartisan Budget Agreement.

Madam Speaker, perhaps the most immediate benefit of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement is that it paves the way for the House and Senate to reach agreement on the FY2016 spending bills needed to keep the federal government open and avoid another disastrous shutdown like the one House Republicans inflicted on the nation in October 2013.

That shutdown lasted 16 days, cost the economy $24 billion, and inflicted untold harm on federal employees and the people they serve.

Madam Speaker, the past several years have been an extraordinary time in America.

We have seen the Legislative and Executive Branches of our government and the constitutional balance that the framers of the Constitution intended regarding matters related to public purse tested.

It is extraordinary when a matter that should be dealt with in the regular order of the business of the House and Senate becomes a matter so grave that a broad and diverse coalition call on Members of this body to do what we were elected to do: manage the business of the people through cooperation and compromise.

That is why we have heard from a broad and diverse range of American voices, including the AARP, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Education Association, and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, calling for the passage of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement.

By supporting the Bipartisan Budget Agreement we can show the American people that we understand that we were sent here to address their problems and concerns by working together to reach agreement that responsibly makes the investments needed to keep our nation competitive in a global economy and enables all of our people to reach their potential and realize their dreams.

UPDATED II: SOME OF THE KEY GROUPS SUPPORTING THE BIPARTISAN BUDGET AGREEMENT

(October 28, 2015)

AARP: ''On behalf of our 38 million members and as the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Americans age 50 and older and their families, AARP strongly supports the bipartisan agreement you have reached to avert deep reductions in Social Security Disability Insurance benefits in 2016, and to address the imminent spike in Medicare Part B premiums which many older Americans would otherwise experience. . . . By finding a sensible solution to keep premiums manageable for over 16 million beneficiaries, Congress is helping to prevent financial hardship for many beneficiaries at a time when there is no Social Security cost of living adjustment. . . . Finally, AARP appreciates that the agreement modifies sequestration for discretionary programs for fiscal year 2016. The higher discretionary cap may prevent unwise cuts to countless programs serving older Americans. Sequestration relief for many health care, nutrition and supportive service programs is critically important to seniors as funding for them has declined over the past decade despite substantial increases in population requiring this assistance.''

Center for Medicare Advocacy: ''Congress is considering the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. This proposed budget agreement would reduce an expected spike in the Medicare Part B deductible and premiums for 2016. . . . We are glad people who rely on Medicare can breathe a bit easier—knowing that premiums and deductibles will not skyrocket next year.''

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities: The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities' (CCD) Fiscal Policy Task Force commends the House and Senate leadership for negotiating the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA). . . . We commend the negotiators for reaching a deal that provides relief from sequestration and raises the budget caps for discretionary programs in Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017. The package provides welcome stability in the appropriations process and avoids a devastating 20% benefit cut in 2016 for Social Security Disability beneficiaries and their families.''

Federation of American Hospitals: ''The Federation of American Hospitals acknowledges that it is incumbent upon Congress to act on the debt ceiling and establish a federal budget. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 agreement, which accomplishes these goals, includes Medicare cuts as offsets. . . . The FAH understands that Congressional leaders did their best to minimize the effects of these cuts on the hospitals that care for the nation's seniors. By extending without increasing the overall effect of the Medicare sequester and focusing a limited payment change on certain physician-hospital arrangements, the bill is carefully crafted to meet its objectives.''

American College of Physicians: ''The American College of Physicians is pleased that today's proposed bipartisan budget agreement will provide two years of relief from existing 'sequestration' level spending caps that could result in cuts to programs that are vital to the nation's healthcare, including the National Institutes of Health, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and Primary Care Training Programs authorized by Section 747 of Title VII of the Public Health Service Act. . . . We [also] strongly support the proposal to ensure all new hospital acquisitions of private physician practices would only be eligible for Medicare payments equal to those for the same care services provided in the free-standing, community-based setting.''

American Academy of Family Physicians: ''On behalf of the Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 120,900 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write in support of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. . . . The AAFP notes that the bill will make two important reforms to Medicare. First, the bill will mitigate an anticipated spike in 2016 in premiums and deductibles for America's Medicare Part B enrollees, which will help avoid disruption in access to physicians' services to seniors. Second, the bill removes an incentive in the Medicare hospital outpatient payment system that has driven health systems to purchase Physician practices, in turn increasing healthcare costs without any corresponding benefit to patient care.''

Chamber of Commerce: ''The U.S. Chamber of Commerce . . . urges Congress to pass the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA2015) to bring certainty to next year's appropriations process, raise the debt limit through March

15, 2017, strengthen America's national security, and constructively resolve a handful of other outstanding issues.''

NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby: ''NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby is encouraged to hear that a budget deal has been reached that will surpass sequester budget caps for the next two years and raise the debt ceiling to prevent a default on our nation's financial obligations. . . . We are encouraged by the White House and Congressional leaderships' work on the proposed budget deal that lifts the caps on non-defense spending. Unaddressed, sequester would have caused hardship for many hardworking and vulnerable people in our nation.''

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights: ''We applaud the White House and congressional leaders who negotiated the budget deal introduced late last night for their hard work in crafting a bipartisan, two-year bill that will raise the caps on spending for both defense and non-defense discretionary spending and provided needed relief for underfunded programs that serve our communities.

Robert Greenstein, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities: ''If approved by Congress, the new budget deal from the White House and congressional leaders will mark a significant achievement by an otherwise polarized Washington. . . . The package would effectively eliminate about 90 percent of the sequestration budget cuts for non-defense discretionary programs in fiscal year 2016, and about 60 percent of them in 2017 . . . extend the solvency of Social Security Disability Insurance through 2022, thereby avoiding across-the-board cuts of nearly 20 percent in disability benefits starting in late 2016, which will otherwise occur, and avoid, for Medicare, an estimated 52 percent increase in deductibles for physician and other outpatient services in 2016, and a 52 percent increase in Part B premiums that roughly 30 percent of Medicare beneficiaries otherwise would face. . . . The deal is a major, multifaceted package that addresses a number of contentious issues. . . . Overall, the deal is a significant achievement that includes an array of sound policies and policy reforms and accomplishes important goals.''

National Education Association: ''On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association (NEA) and the students they serve, we urge you to Vote Yes on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 which could be voted on as early as Wednesday. We applaud the bipartisan leadership exhibited to craft a bill that takes needed steps toward ending harmful sequester level funding so that necessary investments can be made in programs that will grow our economy and our future. Votes associated with this issue may be included in the NEA Legislative Report Card for the 114th Congress.

Committee for Education Funding: ''The Committee for Education Funding (CEF), a coalition of 122 national education associations and institutions spanning early learning to postgraduate education, writes to express our support for the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2015. The bill will eliminate most of the harmful sequester spending caps for nondefense discretionary (NDD) programs for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 and FY 2017, thereby providing room for critically important investments in education programs through appropriations.''

League of Conservation Voters: ''We comment Leader Pelosi, Leader Reid, and President Obama for negotiating a deal free of ideological attacks on our environment that finally ends the cuts that hamper investment in our economy and the priorities of our families. We urge Congress to pass this budget deal and then pass a clean spending bill free of anti-environmental riders that fund all federal agencies at a level that allows them to continue protecting our air, water, lands and wildlife.''

Easter Seals: ''Easter Seals is encouraged by the framework presented in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA). This compromise is designed to restore order to the federal budget and appropriations process, and will allow for much needed investments in people with disabilities. A functioning, effective federal government is critical to people with disabilities who disproportionately rely on government services to live, learn and work in their communities. We commend the negotiators for reaching a deal that provides partial relief from sequestration and raises the budget caps for discretionary programs in Fiscal Year 2016 and 2017 and provides stability.''

NDD United: ''NDD United—an alliance of more than 2,500 national, state, and local organizations working to protect investments in core government functions—strongly supports and urges you to support the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA). This deal, brokered by all four corners of Congressional leadership and the President, restores critical funding equally to both defense and nondefense spending that keeps Americans healthy, safe and secure and ensures that we do not risk the full faith and credit of the United States by suspending the debt ceiling through March 2017.''

AAUW: ''On behalf of the over 170,000 members and supports of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I urge Rep. Pelosi to support the Balanced Budget Act of 2015 (H.R. 1314). The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 lifts sequestration in a fair and responsible manner that ensures communities are healthy, safe, and secure. Cuts as a result of sequestration take a direct toll on our communities. . . . We . . . saw cuts to . . . important programs such as food assistance programs for women and children, cancer screenings, services for domestic violence survivors, and federal funding for low-income schools.''

American Public Health Association: ''The deal will allow Congress to provide much needed additional funding for nondefense discretionary programs in 2016, including public health, which continues to be woefully underfunded. The proposal would also reduce a pending premium increase for many Medicare Part B beneficiaries and extend the solvency of the Social Security Disability Insurance Trust Fund.''

Alliance for Retired Americans: ''The Alliance for Retired Americans is relieved that this budget deal would protect millions of seniors from significant increases to their Medicare Part B deductibles while preventing a 20% cut to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits in 2016. The reallocation between the Social Security Old Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) and SSDI trust funds would prevent a massive cut in benefits for the disabled. The transfer would not impact the long-term solvency of Social Security.''

AFL-CIO: ''Congressional leaders and the President successfully eluded the traps set by a conservative faction in Congress who have tried to hold our economy hostage to achieve their radical agenda. The full faith and credit of the United States will be preserved as we pay our bills on time—preventing brinksmanship over the debt until 2017. . . . It reduces the spike in [Medicare] deductibles for everyone and avoids a sharp increase in premiums for many. It ensures that 11 million Americans on Social Security Disability Insurance continue to receive full benefits through 2022.''

SEIU: ''This deal makes significant progress in eliminating some of the extraordinary hardship and uncertainty associated with the sequester—as well as helps to head off a catastrophic government shutdown. . .''

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time remains on this side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 3¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), a great member of the Budget Committee.

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, first, let me thank our ranking member, Congressman VAN HOLLEN, for yielding and for his tremendous leadership on the Budget Committee.

Also, to Leader PELOSI and to Speaker BOEHNER, I just have to thank you for demonstrating that we can work together in a bipartisan way on behalf of the American people.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1314, which is the bipartisan budget agreement of 2015. Let me just say, as a member of the Appropriations and Budget Committees, I really know how difficult it has been to get us to where we were today. So thank you very much.

This budget deal, though, is not perfect. It averts a shutdown and prevents a catastrophic default on the Federal debt. Most importantly, though, it provides relief from the sequester and it begins—it begins—to invest in the American people through programs like food stamps, a safety net which many, many people need until they are through this economic recession.

We must do more to create good-paying jobs for individuals who want to work. This begins to invest in early childhood education and in public housing.

This agreement also prevents a massive hike in healthcare costs for our seniors. So while this agreement is an important step forward, much work remains.

It is past time that we start addressing the priorities of the American people, including passing bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform, making education affordable and accessible from pre-K through college, investing in workforce training through our community colleges, and building pathways out of poverty.

So, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on this agreement so we can get Congress back to work putting people first. The American Dream has really turned into a nightmare for so many. Hopefully, our action today will give people hope that the American Dream may be achievable. But we must do more.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the

gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE), a terrific new Member of Congress.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, for the cynics who believe that nothing can happen in Washington and that we are permanently doomed to disarray, this has been a very bad week.

First, with the Export-Import Bank, we see a majority of Republicans and an overwhelming majority of Democrats come together and reach a bipartisan compromise, and now here again with this big budget agreement, something that would avoid the catastrophic default, the first in American history if it were to happen.

Madam Speaker, I don't agree with everything that is in this bill, but I agree with the majority of it. It is about time this body stopped allowing the 10 or 20 percent we disagree with to block the 70, 80, and 90 percent we agree with. This is a step in the right direction. This is progress. This is what we need to do more of. I am proud to support it.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, may I ask how much time remains on this side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 45 seconds remaining.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Where we close is where we started. As we all recognize, this agreement is not perfect, but it certainly beats the alternative and is a positive step forward.

It ensures the full faith and credit of the United States. We will pay our bills on time. It prevents damaging sequester cuts to our economy and allows us to invest more in education, in scientific research, and military readiness.

It prevents a 20 percent cut to Social Security Disability beneficiaries, and it prevents a whopping Medicare part B increase for millions of American seniors.

So, again, while many of us would like to see more—and I agree with those who have said that we need to invest more and address many of the other big issues our country faces—this is a positive step forward.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank everybody who helped come together to make it possible. I urge its adoption.

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

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, it has been my goal, as chairman of the Appropriations Committee for these 4 years, to get us back into regular order.

When I first came here and for many years thereafter, we passed 12 individual appropriations bills funding the entire government, but separate bills so that every Member had a chance to dissect each of these bills, offer amendments, debate them, fight them, promote them, what have you, but at least everyone had their day in court.

Then somehow we got off on a tangent to where we could not appropriate separate bills. So at the end of the fiscal year, we had no choice but to pass what is called a continuing resolution, which means we just continue spending as we had for the last year, regardless of the needs of the moment.

That is a terrible way to do business. Agencies, particularly the military, would not have a way to plan their work or to make orders or to deploy troops and the like, a terrible way to do business. We lurch from one crisis to another, it seems.

□ 1645

My goal has been just to get back to that business of appropriating 12 separate bills so that we don't need a CR. We hear current needs. In a CR, you are spending money on projects no longer needed, but, nevertheless, they are required to spend the money, for example. A terrible waste of money.

So to get back on track, the appropriations process, our committee needs to have a top line number to which we appropriate. We have not been getting that number for one reason or the other. But now in this bill, not only are we getting a number for fiscal '16, which we will now use to write an omnibus appropriations bill for current needs and finish it by September 11, the deadline, we will do that, but it will be made up of the bills that have passed both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and in conversations between the two bodies.

Not only do we have the number for fiscal '16, but we have it for fiscal '17, and that is very important. It gives us a year to plan our work to try to marshal through 12 separate bills for the first time in many, many years so that we, with the Senate, can send to the President 12 bills that have the polish and the content put into it and on it by the Members of our bodies, the House and the Senate. That is my goal. That is why I am so strong for this bill. That is the biggest thing in it from my perspective.

It is important that we are helping our folks who are on Social Security Disability to take the worry away from them that they have that that fund will be drying up, which it will be. It is great that we are taking care of the problem with Medicare benefit increases, the interest on Medicare. It is important, very important, of course, that we avoid the default in our debt ceiling coming up momentarily. All of these things you have heard about in this debate are great.

But for me, the 2 years that we have now to get back on regular order and stop lurching from crisis to crisis, to stop that business, this bill will give us that great chance.

I urge Members to support the bill. It is a good one. It is not perfect, not ideal, by any stretch of the imagination, but it is the best we can do with what we have, and the alternative would be disaster. I urge an ''aye'' vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today the House is scheduled to consider the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 which would increase the discretionary spending caps for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 set in the Budget Control Act of 2011 and would include offsets over 10 years. While the legislation would provide funding certainty for discretionary programs in fiscal years 2016 and 2017, it has some concerning provisions as explained below.

The bill provides additional resources for base discretionary non-defense spending far in excess of the levels in the fiscal year 2016 budget conference agreement (S. Con. Res. 11). The amount of base nondefense discretionary increases for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 are $30 billion and $15 billion, respectively, above the levels approved by Congress just over 5 months ago when the budget conference agreement was adopted. The bill also provides an additional adjustment through the Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism (OCO/GWOT) category of $14.9 billion for the State Department and International Affairs budget category, which is $7.9 billion—more than double—what the President requested in his FY16 Budget. If this adjustment becomes law, it will allow non-defense budgetary resources to be shifted from the base discretionary category, which has spending limits, to the OCO/GWOT category which has no spending limits. When both the base and OCO/GWOT increases for non-defense are considered, the total non-defense increase for 2016 and 2017 is $37.9 billion and $22.9 billion, respectively, above the budget conference agreement.

The bill also includes language that directs the Senate to file budget allocations in fiscal year 2017 at levels consistent with the discretionary amounts included in the bill and at the Congressional Budget Office baseline amounts for all other spending, unless a budget conference agreement is reached. This provision makes it highly likely that regular order for the budget process in the Senate will be circumvented and that the Senate will not offer a new budget in fiscal year 2017. If this outcome occurs, it will further erode the integrity of the Congressional budget process by preventing a fiscal year 2017 budget from being adopted that reflects the will of the Majority in the House and Senate. It also means reconciliation will not be available for fiscal year 2017 and Congress will no longer have a balanced budget agreement in place.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Bipartisan Budget Agreement of 2015. While I have concerns about portions of the bill, including the impact it may have on some of our hospitals, there are important provisions in the bill that are essential to protecting the well-being of many Americans.

For example, the bill provides two years of sequester relief, and allows us to increase our investments in critical areas, including education, housing, healthcare, transportation, homeland security, and defense. The agreement also suspends the debt limit until March

15, 2017. This will allow us to get back on track and plan for the future rather than continue governing from crisis to crisis.

The measure keeps Medicare Part B premium costs down for millions of seniors and protects all Medicare beneficiaries from the projected increases in their deductibles.

I am encouraged by this framework and hope that as the bill moves through the process, some of the areas of concern will be worked out and that we will be able to pass bipartisan appropriations measures for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. I urge my colleagues to support the Bipartisan Budget Agreement for the good of our country.

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

Pursuant to House Resolution 495, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the motion to concur by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS).

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

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to concur will be followed by a 5-minute vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 266, nays 167, not voting 2, as follows:

[Roll No. 579]

YEAS—266

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Barr
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Boehner
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gibson
Graham
Granger
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Harper
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (MI)
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
Nunes
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poliquin
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rigell
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walden
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Womack
Yarmuth

NAYS—167

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barton
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Boustany
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Carter (GA)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Collins (GA)
Crawford
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Hardy
Harris
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
Knight
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCaul
McClintock
McKinley
Meadows
Miller (FL)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stewart
Stutzman
Tipton
Trott
Wagner
Walberg
Walker
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wittman
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—2

Hudson
Meeks

□ 1721

Messrs. GUINTA, RUSSELL, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, and Mr. NUGENT changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mses. LEE and SEWELL of Alabama and Messrs. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia and MCDERMOTT changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to concur 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, which the Chair will put de novo.

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

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

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3819. An act to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SUDAN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114–71)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to

Sudan is to continue in effect beyond November 3, 2015.

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan that led to the declaration of a national emergency in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997, and the expansion of that emergency in Executive Order 13400 of April 26, 2006, and with respect to which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13412 of October 13, 2006, has not been resolved. These actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13067 with respect to Sudan.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *October 28, 2015*.

□ 1730

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. 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 Texas?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

STATE LICENSING EFFICIENCY ACT OF 2015

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2643) to direct the Attorney General to provide State officials with access to criminal history information with respect to certain financial service providers required to undergo State criminal background checks, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2643

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 ''State Licensing Efficiency Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. BACKGROUND CHECKS.

Section 1511(a) of the S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 (12 U.S.C. 5110(a)) is amended—

(1) by inserting after ''State-licensed loan originators'' the following: ''and other financial service providers''; and

(2) by inserting before the period the following: ''or other financial service providers''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) and the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2643, offered by my good friend and fellow Texan, Mr. WILLIAMS, is commonsense bipartisan legislation that will address the unintended consequences of the SAFE Act.

This bill passed the Committee on Financial Services by a vote of 57–0. Before I get into the details of this bill, I would like to thank the Texas Banking Commissioner, Charles Cooper, for his help and guidance as the committee considered this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2643 helps ensure a safe consumer financial marketplace by facilitating the licensing of certain financial services providers.

Congress authorized the creation of the National Mortgage Licensing System and Registry, the NMLS, to provide a mechanism for licensing nationwide of financial services providers.

The mission of NMLS is to improve interstate coordination information sharing among regulators, increasing efficiencies for industry and enhanced consumer protection.

Currently, the greater utility NMLS is frustrated by the FBI's current statutory incapacity to enhance the platform by allowing additional financial service providers, other than mortgage loan originators, to be licensed under this system.

When processing licenses, authorized State regulating agencies should have access to the most up-to-date criminal background information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. For certain classes of financial providers, that is not occurring.

The FBI should not be hindered from bringing the same efficiency to the criminal background checks of financial services personnel that the NMLS brought to the mortgage loan originators.

By enabling the State license agencies to obtain these background checks, this bill will make the licensing process more efficient and potentially help qualified businesses get up and running more quickly.

By enhancing the authority to process criminal history records for licensing of financial service providers beyond mortgage loan originators, this bill ensures that State financial regulators have the necessary tools to exercise effective oversight.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that this bill only affects financial services businesses which are already required to conduct background checks and which cannot currently use the NMLS system by Federal law.

H.R. 2643 has the potential to reduce the time it takes to complete background checks from anywhere between 2 days and 2 weeks to 24 hours under the expanded NMLS.

At the end of 2014, there were 20,386 professionals registered in the system. Nationwide there was a need to conduct over 105,000 background checks outside of the system.

It is estimated that this bill will reduce the number of background checks conducted outside the NMLS system by 80 percent and reduce the administrative and regulatory burden of State banking examiners to conduct them.

In closing, I want to make two points. First, no authority to conduct background checks is created by this legislation. Second, no new licensing requirements are created by this legislation.

I want to again thank the gentleman from Texas for his hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 27, 2015.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HENSARLING: I am writing concerning H.R. 2643, the ''State Licensing Efficiency Act of 2015'' which was referred to your Committee as well as the Committee on the Judiciary.

As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions in H.R. 2643 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I agree to discharge our Committee from further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration. The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by forgoing consideration of H.R. 2643 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward. Our Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 27, 2015.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for your October 27th letter regarding H.R. 2643, the ''State Licensing Efficiency Act of 2015.''

I am most appreciative of your decision to forgo action on H.R. 2643 so that it may move expeditiously to the House floor. I acknowledge that although you are waiving action on the bill, the Committee on the Judiciary is in no way waiving its jurisdictional interest in this or similar legislation. In addition, if a conference is necessary on this legislation, I will support any request that your committee be represented therein.

Finally, I shall be pleased to include your letter and this letter in our committee's report on H.R. 2643 and in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the same.

Sincerely,

JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2643, and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation.

I want to briefly say a few words about Mr. WILLIAMS' bill, H.R. 2643, the State Licensing Efficiency Act of 2015.

This legislation is extremely important. I am proud that this bill is a product of a bipartisan effort, a bipartisan effort that, in the last Congress, I was privileged to work with the Committee on Financial Services chair emeritus, Chairman Bachus, on this legislation.

Unfortunately, the clock ran out on the last Congress. So I am very pleased that Mr. WILLIAMS has taken up this legislation and gotten it to the floor.

It just makes all the sense in the world to streamline criminal background checks. I want to thank Mr. WILLIAMS and thank my colleague, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, for championing this legislation.

I urge adoption of this bill. I have no further speakers on this bill.

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS), the primary author of this bill.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I would also like to thank my colleague, Ms. MOORE, for her hard work on this. I appreciate it.

H.R. 2643, the State Licensing Efficiency Act, will expand the State's ability to use a federally accepted registry, the Nationwide Multistate Licensing System, to expedite background checks.

For many State-licensed financial service providers, the current background check process is inefficient, but this registry has a proven track record of being effective while also reducing regulatory burden.

Under the SAFE Act, the current NMLS, developed by State banking commissioners, has been used to oversee the mortgage industry since 2008. To date, the Conference of State Bank Supervisors has channeled over 1.3 million fingerprint checks of mortgage loan originators.

Citing an absence in Federal law, the FBI has prevented its use to conduct background checks for other financial services, including money transmitters, debt collectors, pawnbrokers, and check cashers.

Whereas a State wishing to conduct a criminal background check through traditional means may wait several weeks and sometimes even months for their response, NMLS communicates directly with the FBI and often receives the same results, as we have heard, in just 24 hours.

H.R. 2643 would expand the current system to include those financial service providers who are already licensed by the State and require a Federal background check.

The NMLS provides increased collaboration between State banking departments, reduces the risk of bad actors by preventing them from continuing to operate, and improves the safety and soundness of the financial system as a whole. In short, NMLS provides an added level of assurance to community banks that their business customers and vendors are operating legally.

Supported by the Conference of State Bank Supervisors, expanding the use of NMLS provides State regulators a secure and efficient means by which to conduct background checks on license applicants.

I want to be clear. As we have heard in the past, this bill does not create any requirements for background checks or fingerprints, but greatly increases efficiency and transparency.

In addition, by no means does this bill encourage States to require or mandate States to license or register any additional class of financial service providers.

This act authorizes only State-licensed loan originators and other State-licensed financial service providers to be processed through NMLS for background checks authorized under the laws of the State. Simply put, by expanding its use, NMLS will save industry and, ultimately, the consumer money.

At the end of 2014, there were around 20,386 professionals registered in the NMLS system. Those individuals, as we have heard, required over 105,000 background checks outside the NMLS system. If our bill becomes law, we would reduce that number by 80 percent because we would be using one system instead of 50, saving industry $1.1 million by removing duplicate background checks.

Finally, in my home State of Texas, the expansion of NMLS is supported by State Banking Commissioner Charles Cooper, who we talked about tonight. I want to take a moment to thank Commissioner Cooper for his leadership on this issue.

In addition, I want to thank my own staff and the staff of CSBS, who have worked tirelessly to support our efforts in pushing this legislation through. Without them and the support of my colleagues on the committee and Chairman HENSARLING, none of this would be possible. I thank Chairman NEUGEBAUER, and I thank Ms. MOORE.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 2643.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2643.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1745

SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING GROUP ACT OF 2015

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 623) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to establish a social media working group, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''DHS Social Media Improvement Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING GROUP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 181 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 318. SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING GROUP.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish within the Department a social media working group (in this section referred to as the 'Group').

''(b) PURPOSE.—In order to enhance the dissemination of information through social media technologies between the Department and appropriate stakeholders and to improve use of social media technologies in support of preparedness, response, and recovery, the Group shall identify, and provide guidance and best practices to the emergency preparedness and response community on, the use of social media technologies before, during, and after a natural disaster or an act of terrorism or other man-made disaster.

''(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Membership of the Group shall be composed of a cross section of subject matter experts from Federal, State, local, tribal, territorial, and nongovernmental organization practitioners, including representatives from the following entities:

''(A) The Office of Public Affairs of the Department.

''(B) The Office of the Chief Information Officer of the Department.

''(C) The Privacy Office of the Department.

''(D) The Federal Emergency Management Agency.

''(E) The Office of Disability Integration and Coordination of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

''(F) The American Red Cross.

''(G) The Forest Service.

''(H) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

''(I) The United States Geological Survey.

''(J) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

''(2) CHAIRPERSON; CO-CHAIRPERSON.—

''(A) CHAIRPERSON.—The Secretary, or a designee of the Secretary, shall serve as the chairperson of the Group.

''(B) CO-CHAIRPERSON.—The chairperson shall designate, on a rotating basis, a representative from a State or local government who is a member of the Group to serve as the co-chairperson of the Group.

''(3) ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.—The chairperson shall appoint, on a rotating basis, qualified individuals to the Group. The total number of such additional members shall—

''(A) be equal to or greater than the total number of regular members under paragraph (1); and

''(B) include—

''(i) not fewer than 3 representatives from the private sector; and

''(ii) representatives from—

''(I) State, local, tribal, and territorial entities, including from—

''(aa) law enforcement;

''(bb) fire services;

''(cc) emergency management; and

''(dd) public health entities;

''(II) universities and academia; and

''(III) nonprofit disaster relief organizations.

''(4) TERM LIMITS.—The chairperson shall establish term limits for individuals appointed to the Group under paragraph (3).

''(d) CONSULTATION WITH NON-MEMBERS.—To the extent practicable, the Group shall work with entities in the public and private sectors to carry out subsection (b).

''(e) MEETINGS.—

''(1) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Group shall hold its initial meeting.

''(2) SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS.—After the initial meeting under paragraph (1), the Group shall meet—

''(A) at the call of the chairperson; and

''(B) not less frequently than twice each year.

''(3) VIRTUAL MEETINGS.—Each meeting of the Group may be held virtually.

''(f) REPORTS.—During each year in which the Group meets, the Group shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that includes the following:

''(1) A review and analysis of current and emerging social media technologies being used to support preparedness and response activities related to natural disasters and acts of terrorism and other man-made disasters.

''(2) A review of best practices and lessons learned on the use of social media technologies during the response to natural disasters and acts of terrorism and other man-made disasters that occurred during the period covered by the report at issue.

''(3) Recommendations to improve the Department's use of social media technologies for emergency management purposes.

''(4) Recommendations to improve public awareness of the type of information disseminated through social media technologies, and how to access such information, during a natural disaster or an act of terrorism or other man-made disaster.

''(5) A review of available training for Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial officials on the use of social media technologies in response to a natural disaster or an act of terrorism or other man-made disaster.

''(6) A review of coordination efforts with the private sector to discuss and resolve legal, operational, technical, privacy, and security concerns.

''(g) DURATION OF GROUP.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Group shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this section unless the chairperson renews the Group for a successive 5-year period, prior to the date on which the Group would otherwise terminate, by submitting to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives a certification that the continued existence of the Group is necessary to fulfill the purpose described in subsection (b).

''(2) CONTINUED RENEWAL.—The chairperson may continue to renew the Group for successive 5-year periods by submitting a certification in accordance with paragraph (1) prior to the date on which the Group would otherwise terminate.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 317 the following:

''Sec. 318. Social media working group.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CARSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 623, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As disasters become more frequent and severe, it is critical that emergency managers and citizens take advantage of new technologies to send and receive critical information.

Social media has become an essential tool in the preparedness, response, and recovery for all hazards, whether natural or manmade. We saw how critical social media was in relaying information following Hurricane Sandy, the Boston Marathon bombing, and, just a few weeks ago, during Hurricane Joaquin and the historic flooding in South Carolina. Social media helps reach people in need, helps get the right information into the hands of the public, helps organize volunteers, and can be a source of critical on-the-ground information to decisionmakers.

H.R. 623, as amended by the Senate, would require DHS to establish a social media working group to enhance the use of social media to support preparedness, response, and recovery of all hazards. This group will be required to report to Congress on an annual basis on its findings, emerging trends, and best practices.

I commend the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) for sponsoring this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 623, the DHS Social Media Improvement Act of 2015, was introduced by my good friend and colleague from Indiana, Congresswoman SUSAN BROOKS.

The bill, Mr. Speaker, was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and to the Committee on Homeland Security. This bill codifies the Department of Homeland Security's Social Media Working Group to enhance the use of social media during disasters and other events, and to provide guidance and best practices in emergency preparedness and response. Social media, especially Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, can play a critical role in preparedness, response, and recovery operations during emergencies.

Emergency managers at all levels use social media to warn those in harm's way of impending natural hazards. Social media is also used to inform survivors on how to access disaster assistance and tips for speedier recoveries. Equally important, Mr. Speaker, social media has been used to coordinate and manage assistance from nonprofits and volunteers who want to help in recovery efforts.

More and more, we are seeing individuals take to social media during emergencies. Individuals have used social media to help identify locations where assistance may still be needed and to raise awareness of impending hazards. They have also used it, Mr. Speaker, to communicate with loved ones who may be impacted by an event as well as reconnect pets with their owners. This has certainly been the case in the great Hoosier State.

This last summer, Mr. Speaker, will go down as the wettest summer in Indianapolis history. Rainfall in July broke a 140-year-old record in our great city, making it the wettest month ever recorded, and social media helped keep residents informed in real time. In Indianapolis, the National Weather Service, Department of Homeland Security, and local broadcasters routinely used social media to post updates on ever-changing weather conditions.

The very unique benefit of social media alerts is that you don't have to be right next to a radio or TV to be informed; you can virtually be anywhere. This summer, when dangerous flooding covered many roads in our city, social media exploded with pictures of flooded roadways and stranded motorists. This nontraditional tool enabled people to know where major problems were located and to avoid danger with the famous catchphrase, ''Turn Around Don't Drown.''

The existing DHS Social Media Working Group provides recommendations on how to use social media before, during, and after emergencies. This working group, Mr. Speaker, consists of emergency responders, NGOs, nonprofits, and Federal agencies.

I support the provisions in today's bill to broaden the group's membership to include private sector representatives and to require consultation with nonmembers.

To ensure accountability, this requires an annual report to Congress on important issues, such as best practices and lessons learned. It would also provide recommendations on how to improve the use of the social media

platform for emergency management purposes.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we recognize the importance of this platform for emergency management. I would be remiss not to remind our colleagues of the need to authorize the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, also known as IPAWS.

As the committee of primary jurisdiction over IPAWS, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee unanimously approved the Barletta-Carson IPAWS authorization bill back in April and ordered the bill reported. It is past time for this bill to be considered in the House.

Despite the Senate's inadvertent omission of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I support this bill, Mr. Speaker, and I urge our colleagues to do the same to approve this measure.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS), the sponsor of this bill.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 623, the DHS Social Media Improvement Act of 2015.

I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his management of the bill and, also, my good friend and colleague from the State of Indiana, Congressman CARSON. Both of us have served in public safety in the past, and so it is especially gratifying that he is managing the bill as well this evening.

Social media, as we have heard, is transforming the way the Nation is communicating before, during, and after terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and other emergencies. There are countless examples from recent events of how citizens are turning to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and even Snapchat for public safety information, to comfort survivors, tell loved ones they are safe, and request assistance.

As has already been mentioned, citizens of South Carolina used social media to communicate with first responders, friends, and families after heavy rainfall caused destructive flash flooding across the State.

Additionally, a quarter of Americans—let me repeat, a quarter of Americans—got information about the devastating terrorist attack at the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing from Facebook and Twitter.

Citizens are not the only ones using social media during and after an emergency. First responders are proactively using social media as a force multiplier to get vital information out. For example, immediately following the terrorist attack and during the manhunt, the Boston PD utilized social media as a way to communicate with and solicit information from citizens and visitors.

These are just a few of the hundreds of examples that demonstrate the prevalence of social media use before, during, and after an emergency.

In the 113th Congress, I served as the chair of the Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications. The subcommittee held two hearings that focused on this new phenomenon, and I learned at that time that while the Nation is making great strides in this area, gaps and challenges remain.

One of the key takeaways, however, was that during and after a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other emergency, there is still a need for better communication between the public and the private sectors, specifically, with how to utilize social media as a communication tool.

So last year, I was proud to work with the ranking member, Congressman PAYNE, to find ways to better utilize social media during disasters by leveraging both public and private resources and experiences.

The bill passed with overwhelming support last Congress and, after reintroduction this Congress, I am pleased to say, in February, the House again resoundingly agreed to its passage.

H.R. 623, while authorizing and enhancing the Department of Homeland Security's existing social media group, essentially what it does is it ensures that best practices and lessons learned on the use of social media during terrorist attacks or disasters are being discussed and shared with Federal, State, and local first responders, nongovernmental organizations, academia, and the private sector.

Currently, the Virtual Social Media Working Group is made up primarily of State and local officials, and they are doing great work and developing guidance. However, this bill will increase the group's stakeholder participation, particularly among the private sector and the Federal response agencies.

So by including private sector groups like Google and Twitter and Facebook, we know it will improve coordination and relief efforts. Also, as we have already heard, it will require the group to submit an annual report to Congress highlighting best practices, lessons learned, and any recommendations. Finally, this bill will require the group to meet, in person or virtually, at least twice a year, and will not be a financial burden on the Department.

I appreciate the swift action of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. I especially want to thank Chairman JOHNSON for his leadership on this issue. Their thoughtful additions have served to further improve the bill.

I also want to thank Chairman SHUSTER and Chairman BARLETTA of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for working with me to get this bill to the floor, and also my successor at EPRC, Ms. MCSALLY, for continuing to make this issue a priority.

Finally, I want to thank the staff, because we know that this bill and the improvements with technology will save lives, and it will make our first responders and those in danger safer.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 623.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NORTHERN BORDER SECURITY REVIEW ACT

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 455) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct a northern border threat analysis, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 455

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 ''Northern Border Security Review Act''.

SEC. 2. NORTHERN BORDER THREAT ANALYSIS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a Northern Border threat analysis that includes—

(1) current and potential terrorism and criminal threats posed by individuals and organized groups seeking to—

(A) enter the United States through the Northern Border; or

(B) exploit border vulnerabilities along the Northern Border;

(2) improvements needed at and between ports of entry along the Northern Border to—

(A) prevent terrorists and instruments of terror from entering the United States; and

(B) reduce criminal activity, as measured by the total flow of illegal goods, illicit drugs, and smuggled and trafficked persons moved in either direction across the Northern Border;

(3) gaps in law, policy, cooperation between State, local, and tribal law enforcement, international agreements, or tribal agreements that hinder effective and efficient border security, counter-terrorism, anti-human smuggling and trafficking efforts, and the flow of legitimate trade along the Northern Border; and

(4) an analysis of whether additional U.S. Customs and Border Protection preclearance and pre-inspection operations at ports of entry along the Northern Border could help prevent terrorists and instruments of terror from entering the United States.

(b) ANALYSIS REQUIREMENTS.—For the threat analysis required under subsection (a), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall consider and examine—

(1) technology needs and challenges;

(2) personnel needs and challenges;

(3) the role of State, local, and tribal law enforcement in general border security activities;

(4) the need for cooperation among Federal, State, local, tribal, and Canadian law enforcement entities relating to border security; and

(5) the terrain, population density, and climate along the Northern Border.

(c) CLASSIFIED THREAT ANALYSIS.—To the extent possible, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit the threat analysis required under subsection (a) in unclassified form. The Secretary may submit a portion of the threat analysis in classified form if the Secretary determines such is appropriate.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(2) NORTHERN BORDER.—The term ''Northern Border'' means the land and maritime borders between the United States and Canada.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 455, the Northern Border Security Review Act, and urge its passage. This legislation would require the Department of Homeland Security to conduct a much-needed threat analysis of current and potential threats along our Nation's vast northern border.

As a former Federal prosecutor on both the northern border in New York and the southern border in El Paso, Texas, not to mention my time as a Federal prosecutor on the island of Puerto Rico, I have seen firsthand the challenges our Nation faces to counter violent drug trafficking organizations, organized crime syndicates, and human trafficking that transit across our Nation's border.

While great attention is justifiably given to the challenges of securing our southern border, ensuring the safety of our vast northern border is also critical to our Nation's security. It has been well documented that several major terrorist plots have been discovered and disrupted along the northern border in recent years.

□ 1800

Ahmed Ressam, the so-called millennium bomber, was entering Washington State from Canada with a concealed bomb intended to detonate at LAX Airport when he was arrested by alert Customs agents in 1999.

In 2013, with the help of our Canadian allies, the FBI and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police thwarted an attempt to derail and kill passengers on a train between New York and Toronto, which became known as the VIA rail plot.

As chairman of the Homeland Security Committee's bipartisan Foreign Fighters Task Force, I recently examined other vulnerabilities at our border associated with foreign fighter travel. Unfortunately, neither the United States nor Canada is immune to the threat of foreign fighters who may be inspired by groups like ISIS or otherwise radicalized online from others abroad.

Among the findings of the bipartisan Task Force was the identification of security weaknesses that are putting the U.S. homeland in danger by making it easier for foreign fighters to migrate to terrorist hotspots and for jihadists to return to the West. One such vulnerability stems from our vast northern border that we share with Canada. Along this border, we face a number of unique challenges both geographically and jurisdictionally.

Complicating the current understanding of the security needs along our northern border is the administration's decision to stop providing metrics to Congress in 2010 that identified the number of miles under operational control.

In that year, the Government Accountability Office reported that only 69 miles, or about 2 percent of the northern border's 4,000 miles, were under operational control. Let me repeat that. Only 2 percent of our northern border is under operational control.

To address this lack of information with regard to the state of northern border security, this legislation requires that an assessment be conducted to analyze a variety of issues facing the northern border. These include potential terrorist threats, potential improvements, gaps in law or policy, and illegal border activity.

This analysis is intended to better inform any resources that are needed along the border to increase operational control and legislation that can result therefrom.

I recently had the opportunity to spend time with CBP officers and agents at the Port of Oswego in my district. I am continually impressed with their ability to carry out their duties in incredibly difficult situations.

This bill will help them better secure our Nation's borders, as it will give our agents and officers the tools and information needed to better do their jobs.

Previous analyses of the northern border have largely focused on drug trafficking and lack a holistic security approach to the issues that are unique along the northern border.

The analysis required in this bill will provide Customs and Border Protection with the foundation needed to address all threats at and between ports of entry along the northern border. It will also provide Congress with the information necessary to conduct proper oversight.

In my 10 months in office, I have worked vigorously to address known challenges that the Department of Homeland Security faces. Since January, I, along with both my Republican and Democratic colleagues, have introduced seven pieces of legislation that address transportation and border security issues and hope that this will be the third bipartisan bill that we send to the President's desk.

This final product embodies the essence of bipartisanship, and I am proud to say that all Americans will benefit from the work my colleagues and I have done to secure our northern border.

My colleagues and I understand we have a lot more work to do, and I promise we will continue to provide diligent oversight of the Department of Homeland Security. When we see a problem at this agency, we work swiftly together in a bipartisan manner with our Democratic brothers and sisters to address it.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.

I would like to thank Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security Chairman CANDICE MILLER for her support, along with my fellow northern border colleagues who have joined as cosponsors.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HIGGINS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 455, the Northern Border Security Review Act, introduced by my friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO).

The bill before us would direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to prepare a northern border threat analysis. There has long been an intent focus on the southern border and the many challenges faced there. While this is undoubtedly justified, the northern border has often been neglected in this process.

The Northern Border Security Review Act takes steps to correct this disparity by requiring an analysis of terror threats posed by individuals entering through the northern border as well as improvements needed at and between ports to prevent their entry.

I was pleased that two of my amendments were adopted in committee. The first required an analysis of whether the implementation of preclearance and preinspection at additional ports of entry would enhance our security and prevent terrorists from entering the United States.

A preinspection pilot at the Peace Bridge in Buffalo was conducted in early 2014 and was deemed a success. It demonstrated the potential to efficiently process cargo while also enabling Customs and Border Protection

to conduct inspections and interdict threats before they reach the United States.

The historic preclearance agreement reached between the United States and Canada earlier this year paved the way for implementation of permanent preinspection and preclearance at the Peace Bridge and other locations.

The second amendment would require an analysis of the number of additional Customs and Border Protection officers and agents needed to properly staff the northern border. Persistent staffing shortages have resulted in wait times that discourage economic activity while also leaving us vulnerable to a number of threats.

That is why I was disappointed that this language was weakened during negotiations with the Senate. Having accurate information on the number of personnel required to detect illicit activity while facilitating legitimate trade and travel is vital. It is my hope that analysis on staffing requirements is included in forthcoming legislation.

H.R. 455 will help ensure that we better understand the threats facing the northern border so we can understand how best to address them. With that in mind, I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from New York has no further speakers, I am prepared to close once the gentleman does.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VELA), and the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) for their great leadership.

Mr. Speaker, the good news is that we on the Committee on Homeland Security work together very well on many of these issues.

I rise to support the Northern Border Security Review Act, H.R. 455. My colleague from Texas (Mr. VELA) is the ranking member. I am delighted to be able to support a bill that captures all of what we have been speaking of over the years.

As a member of Homeland Security, there are two borders. There is the southern border, for which I certainly have concern, as a Representative from Texas, but there is also the northern border. I am glad to say I have been to the northern border, walked along the northern border.

Let me say thank you for the aspects of this bill. H.R. 455 directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit a classified northern border threat analysis on terrorism threats posed by individuals seeking to enter the United States, improvements needed at ports of entry, gaps in law, policy, international agreements, illegal cross-border activity, and the scope of the border security challenges.

This is a complete picture of the Nation's border, including whether additional preclearance and preinspection by CBP at ports of entry along the northern border could help prevent terrorists and their instruments from entering the United States.

Canada has been a longstanding friend. I believe anytime that we can enhance both the relationship and the security of the U.S.-Canadian border, the northern border, it is a very positive step forward for the Nation's security.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 455, the Northern Border Security Review Act.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security, a former ranking member of its Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, and a co-sponsor, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 455, the "Northern Border Security Review Act."

I would like to thank Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member THOMPSON of the Homeland Security Committee and Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member VELA of the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee for their work on this vital legislation.

Their leadership, coupled with input from members of the Homeland Security Committee and the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, have helped make this common sense legislation a reality.

I very much appreciate the bipartisan spirit Chairman MILLER has displayed as we worked together on many border security initiatives over the past several years.

The security of the Northern Border is an important area of concern in the effort to secure our homeland and keep it safe from those who would do us harm.

BILL OVERVIEW

H.R. 455 directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit a classified northern border threat analysis, which shall include analyses of:

1. terrorism threats posed by individuals seeking to enter the United States through the northern border;

2. improvements needed at ports of entry along the northern border to prevent terrorists and instruments of terror from entering the United States;

3. gaps in law, policy, international agreements, or tribal agreements that hinder the border security and counterterrorism efforts along the northern border;

4. illegal cross border activity between ports of entry, including the maritime borders of the Great Lakes;

5. the scope of border security challenges that shall include the terrain, population density, and climate along the northern border; and

6. whether additional preclearance and preinspection by the CBP at ports of entry along the northern border could help prevent terrorists and their instruments from entering the United States.

CANADA-U.S. BORDER

Mr. Speaker, at 5,524 miles, the border separating Canada and United States is the longest contiguous international border in the world.

In contrast, the border separating the United States and Mexico is only Mexico border is only 1,951 miles long.

The border with Canada is significantly easier to cross, due to less Border Patrol personnel.

The United States has approximately 1,000 Border Patrol agents assigned to the northern border but more than 11,000 patrolling its southern border with Mexico.

TRAVEL BETWEEN CANADA AND U.S.

In 2009, there were 39,254,000 trips by Canadians to the United States.

In 2010, 20,213,500 Americans traveled to Canada from the United States.

Over 15,700,000 people flew on commercial flights between Canada and the U.S. in 2010.

CANADIAN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN U S.

Current estimates show there to be around 600,000 undocumented Canadian immigrants working in the United States.

Canadian citizens are not required to obtain visas; instead as Canadian citizens they are eligible for visa waivers which do not expire for six months.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, the security of homeland requires that we have increased situational awareness and resources to respond to threats on the nation's northern, as well as southern border.

H.R. 455 makes a positive contribution in this effort and I urge all Members to join me in voting for its passage.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I briefly just want to thank the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) for their comments. They echo the sentiments that I believe firmly, that the Homeland Security Subcommittee is probably the most bipartisan committee in Congress. It is an honor to be a part of it. It is an honor to serve with my colleagues I just mentioned and the others.

Every single bill we have has bipartisan support. Every single bill seems to be like we are all on the same page, and that is really important when we have national security issues at hand.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, too often in Congress our debate on border security is long on political rhetoric and short on substance. Development of a substantive and thorough analysis of border security threats is essential to decisionmaking at all levels about how best to respond. This bill will help us do just that.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 455, the Northern Border Security Review Act, to help us understand and ultimately address any threats along our border with Canada.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 455. This bill is going to form the foundation for properly securing the northern border once and for all.

While our Canadian brothers and sisters are indeed our friends, the fact remains that bad people in Canada are intent on coming to the United States and vice versa and are intent on doing

harm here. We must secure our borders.

Having a 98 percent open border with Canada is absolutely unacceptable. This bill is the first step in moving towards securing that border in a proper manner by making sure that we do a proper analysis once and for all, which I am not sure has ever been done in this manner.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 455, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BIPARTISANSHIP IN CONGRESS

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

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, this week Congress voted on the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank. Moments ago we just cleared a bipartisan budget, which now makes its way to the Senate. Through this budget, we lift our debt ceiling and increase our defense and nondefense spending equally for 2 years and we avoid a government shutdown.

I agree with many of my colleagues that we must reduce our Nation's growing debt, but we need to make sure that we do not do so at the expense of our country's future and our ability to compete in a changing global economy.

We, as Congress, need to come together to find long-term, bipartisan, commonsense solutions rather than play politics with our national security, economy, and the well-being of its people.

Tomorrow the House of Representatives votes for a new Speaker. I hope that, under this new leadership, we see a change in how we govern. I hope Congress will no longer shy away from addressing the tough issues. I hope we can come together, both Republicans and Democrats, to get the people's work done.

HEAD START

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the students, parents, staff, alumni, and supporters of Head Start as they celebrate Head Start Awareness Month and 50 years of service to our Nation's most vulnerable children.

On May 18, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson launched Project Head Start as an 8-week summer demonstration project to teach low-income students essential skills to prepare them for kindergarten.

Since that date, Head Start has served 32 million children and families across the country, providing them with the tools they need to build successful futures, helping to ensure a quality education and access to health care and social services. Head Start is a critical investment in the education of our Nation's youngest children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that, as a body, we reaffirm our investment in the children who are the future of this country. I urge my colleagues to support bipartisan efforts to give all of America's children a head start in life and an open door to opportunity.

□ 1815

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CLEAN POWER PLAN

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of President Obama's Clean Power Plan, and I would like to applaud the 10,000 men and women, African American faith leaders, who are engaged, involved, and committed to clean air. These faith leaders represent 13 million African American churchgoers who remain steadfast and unmovable in their cause to combat the negative impact of climate change.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Congressional Black Caucus tomorrow will receive the signatures and public statements of those demanding that this body fully support President Obama's Clean Power Plan. Nearly 40 percent of the 6 million Americans living close to coal-fired power plants are people of color and disproportionately African Americans.

Pollution and damaging toxins from these plants are responsible for thousands of premature deaths, higher risk of asthma attacks, respiratory disease, and hundreds of thousands missed workdays.

I believe this Congress can hear the Black church and work together. The Black church and their fearless leaders for generations have stood united on critical social, economic, and moral imperatives that are meant to strengthen the communities they represent. They have been in the forefront, like Dr. Martin Luther King, who walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge with our colleague, JOHN LEWIS, for voting rights.

Climate change and their support for the Clean Power Plan is no different. They are in the forefront. As they state in their letter to us, ''The Bible speaks passionately about the importance of stewardship for God's creation,'' and they believe that Obama's Power Plan calls them to action.

Mr. Speaker, I join with these ladies and gentlemen in their dedication to saving lives.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of President Obama's ''Clean Power Plan.''

I would like to applaud the more than 10,000 men and women African American faith leaders.

These faith leaders represent 13 million African American church-goers who remain steadfast and unmovable in their cause to combat the negative impact of climate change.

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The Black Church and their fearless leaders, for generations, have stood united on critical social and economic moral imperatives that are meant to strengthen the communities they represent.

Climate change and their support for the Clean Power Plan are no different.

As they state in their letter to us: ''The Bible speaks passionately about the importance of stewardship for God's creation. And President Obama's Clean Power Plan echoes God's call.''

Once again, I salute these dedicated men and women of God and for the vital work they are doing on this important issue.

FOCUSING ON WORKING FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, about 1 year ago, Speaker BOEHNER and Senate Majority Leader MCCONNELL described a vision for the 114th Congress. It included ''focusing first on jobs and the economy.'' They looked forward to helping middle class Americans ''frustrated by an increasing lack of opportunity, the stagnation of wages, and a government that seems incapable of performing even basic tasks.''

In the time since, they have done nothing but protect big businesses enjoy record profits, attack immigrants, and help polluters continue the destruction of our environment.

This body has voted four times in support of the Confederate battle flag, but we have taken no votes on legislation that will level the playing field for

working Americans. This body has voted against a solid, long-term transportation and infrastructure bill five times, and we have taken no votes on legislation to boost American wages. This body has voted countless times to undermine the Affordable Care Act or endanger women's access to health care, but we have taken no votes on legislation to help families balance the needs of work and their personal lives. That is in spite of statements from Members like the Republican nominee for Speaker who just last week indicated he wouldn't run for the position unless he would be allowed to set aside time to spend with his family.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I are here on the floor tonight to call for a shift in focus. We were elected to ensure everyday Americans have a fighting chance and opportunities to succeed. We need to change gears to get to work on an agenda for working families. We need to pass legislation that would give workers the ability to balance work and family needs, bills like the Healthy Families Act, the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act, the Schedules That Work Act, and the Strong Start for America's Children Act. We need to pass legislation that will give workers paychecks that actually give them a chance to make ends meet, bills like the Raise the Wage Act, the WAGE Act, and the Payroll Fraud Prevention Act.

We need to pass legislation that will give every American a chance to succeed and climb into the middle class regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or any other quality, bills like the Paycheck Fairness Act, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, and the Equality Act.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, you will hear stories from across the country of working families who have played by the rules and worked for long hours and still can't seem to make it work. These experiences are shared with countless others from my district in New Jersey all the way across the Nation to California.

I hope that my colleagues are ready to listen, and, more importantly, I hope they are ready to act.

It is my pleasure to yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. I would like to thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I also would like to thank the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) for her tireless support of the progressive message and her long work in New Jersey, but also here in Congress. Thank you, ma'am.

Mr. Speaker, Working Families Day of Action, the day when we came together to talk about the agenda for working people, is a far cry from what my Republican colleagues like to talk about on a daily basis. But working people in this country need an advocate; they need somebody in Congress to care.

I want to tell a quick story about a young lady in my district. Her name is Randa Jama, and she is a member of SEIU Local 26, who took a job as a wheelchair attendant at the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Airport last fall with AirServ, a Delta Airlines subcontractor. It was supposed to be a full-time position, but her employer suddenly cut her hours to only 12 hours a week. She explains to me: ''They told me that you are working only Saturday and Sunday from now on.'' Her supervisors would still sometimes ask her at the last minute to stay late or do an extra shift, but she can't work at such short notice even though she needs the hours because it is hard to get access to babysitters. She is a young mom.

Now, on behalf of Randa Jama and many other people, I just want to make a few reflections here today, and that is that things are absolutely out of balance. They are out of balance, and the gap between rich and everybody else is wider now than it has been in decades; and working people, consumers, and environmental advocates are starting to come together to demand good jobs and shared prosperity.

The story today is not necessarily about income inequality. We all know that. But what we may not know is how Americans all over this country are moving, shaking, and doing what they need to do. Whether it is the workers of the Restaurant Opportunities Centers or whether it is WorkingAmerica or whether it is the people in the labor movement, the Fight for $15, people all over this country—Americans—are not taking this situation lying down.

We are here today to talk about what working families need and what they are doing. They face stagnating wages and struggle to balance the demands at home and on the job. I am very pleased that when it was announced that PAUL RYAN, our colleague, was considering accepting the role of Speaker of the House, he insisted that he would have proper work-life balance and was not going to give up home time. I hope that is a signal that we can pursue a shared agenda of the work-life balance for all families all across America.

Too many lack access to paid sick leave and affordable child care. For workers who don't have a reliable work schedule, it is often impossible to plan and to pay for child care, rent, transportation, and groceries. People are not working enough hours in many cases, and when they get those hours, they often have to choose between leaving their kids at home or taking the hours that they so desperately need. Workers are seeing their right to organize erode.

Here is another opportunity to tell you a good story, which is true, about a friend named Kipp Hedges. Kipp Hedges worked as a baggage handler for 25 years for Delta. He did an awesome job day in and day out and was a member of his union. The people at the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Airport said: Hey, we want to form a union.

The people who pushed the wheelchairs, the folks who drive the disabled around the airport, and the folks who clean up the airport wanted a union. He said: Well, that is a good effort, and I want to support it.

He got fired. He got fired.

A lot of people who try to organize unions today get fired for engaging in union activity. That is wrong, and it is against the National Labor Relations Act, but people get fired for it anyway. The fact is it takes them a long time to ever get any kind of satisfaction.

In the mid-1950s, you should note that the percentage of workers belonging to unions was about 33 percent. But between 1973 and 2007, private sector union membership plummeted all the way down from about 33, 34 percent down to about 8 percent for men and about from 16 percent to 6 percent for women. It is a devastating situation.

We all know that when people are in unions they make more. People of color in unions make more than people of color not in unions. Women in unions make more money than women not in unions. Even White men in unions, working men, make more money than White men not in unions. The union factor makes a big difference.

The decline is estimated to explain at least one-third of the growth in wage inequality among men and one-fifth of the growth in wage inequality among women. The decline of union density has resulted directly in Americans of all backgrounds having less money in their paychecks.

Now, the American economy is growing. This is the richest country in the world, and it is actually doing pretty well. But the share of that growth has only been going to the very richest few, and it has not been distributed equally.

This is a pivotal moment in our history, and Americans are stepping up to do something about it. We can see clearly now that tax cuts for big corporations won't help working people. We hear all the time, day in and day out, that if you cut taxes for the wealthy and you don't make them obey any health and safety rules, then they will use all that extra money to start businesses, buy inventory, start plants, and buy equipment, and that will give the rest of us jobs. That kind of philosophy has a name. It is called trickle-down economics. It doesn't work now, and it didn't work then. It never works. As a matter of fact, Americans all over are starting to see that a tax cut for a big corporation or a wealthy individual and allowing them to abandon health and safety rules is not going to benefit anybody but them. In fact, it is going to hurt us quite a bit.

Mr. Speaker, we know that deregulation won't help consumers, and we know that it is not going to help the environment. It will leave our consumers at the tender mercies of the business community, and it will leave our communities at the tender mercy of polluters. We can't afford that.

Things are radically out of balance, and working people, consumers, and

environmental advocates need to band together to push back for shared prosperity. We in Congress need to stand with them. One thing we can do is support policies and priorities outlined in the Day of Action. One thing we can do is stand in support of the policy priorities outlined in this Working Families Day of Action, #workingfamilies. We in Congress need to stand with them.

Today we are highlighting bills that would: one, raise wages; two, protect the right to unionize and organize; three, increase access to paid sick leave, family leave, and affordable child care; and, four, promote fair scheduling at the workplace and fight workplace discrimination.

Let me just mention a few steps before I turn it over. On the issue of fair scheduling, this is a big deal. There are more than 23 million workers in low-wage jobs, and two-thirds of these workers are women. Workers in these jobs often face schedules that are rigid, unpredictable, and unstable, which can make it impossible to successfully juggle responsibilities on and off the job.

I just want to say to any small business who worries about fair scheduling: We want to be in conversation with you. We want to talk it out and work it out. We know that sometimes things do come up in unexpected ways. But for sure, we can discuss, as Americans, how to work out a schedule that is a family-friendly schedule and that meets the needs of the business. What we have now is a completely unpredictable environment where people are left either choosing between leaving their kids at home or abandoning those hours that are available.

I also want to mention something about unions. A typical union worker makes 30 percent more than a nonunion worker. This is a fact. The companies they work for are thriving and growing. There are tons of union companies all over this country that are making a lot of money. The question is: How big is the CEO's bonus? If we can have some union representation, the company can thrive, but the workers can share in that thriving. Right now, workers are eking a living hand to mouth and paycheck to paycheck, and the CEO bonuses are out of control.

□ 1830

Unionized African American workers make 36 percent more than nonunionized African Americans. Unionized Hispanic women make 46 percent more than nonunionized Hispanic women.

Let me just wrap up with a little quick story because this really is about people, Mr. Speaker. It is about people. It is not just about the stats. It is about people.

This is a worker who was required to have open availability and still can't get the hours. She is required to get open availability and still can't get the hours. Her name is Jill, and she works for JCPenney.

She writes:

My name is Jill Ernst. When I interviewed at JCPenney in Minnesota, part of how I got the job was that I had to have a very flexible schedule.

I was open all 7 days of the week, but now they only give me less than 35 hours. If they give me less than 34.5 hours, it's a struggle to pay rent and my bills. If they put me on the schedule for 28 hours, I have to figure out how to convince my manager to give me more hours or find someone who is willing to give up hours.

My schedule is so inconsistent that, if I need to take paid time off for 1 day, I know that I'll have to take the entire week off or I'll be scheduled a bunch of short days and not be paid for that 1 day off.

Mr. Speaker, we need to stand up for working families, who had a day of action yesterday: #workingfamilies. We know there is inequality. We know the wages have stagnated. We know that it is tough out there for working Americans.

But working Americans aren't sitting around taking it on the chin. They are out there demanding a fair share of this economy, and Congress should stand there with them.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. ELLISON, who has been a very strong and consistent voice on behalf of all working families and, indeed, all of those that are least among us couldn't have a better advocate.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking Congresswoman BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN for organizing this evening.

Many members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus I hope will be coming down and joining us this evening for a tribute to this Working Families Day of Action, the Working Families Agenda. Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN listed some of the bills that we have on that agenda.

The problems that working families are facing are not intractable. We know that many working women and men are struggling today, but these problems are not unsurmountable. In fact, they could be solved relatively easily if the Republican majority would work with us to pass legislation that would bring U.S. labor policies in line with the rest of the industrialized world. We have the legislation. We have the public support. We just need action.

One solution, which my colleague, Mr. ELLISON, mentioned is to allow workers to join unions. We know that union members earn more and have better benefits. A study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research found that unionized women earn, on average, $2.50 more per hour, are 36 percent more likely to have an employ-sponsored benefit plan and 18 percent more likely to have paid sick leave.

Last week I visited with some O'Hare airport workers who came to Washington, baggage handlers, passenger transporters—the people who push the wheelchairs—and others. They are hired by contractors like Prospect Company.

Now, they are wearing uniforms, and it looks to me like they are hired by either the airline or the airport. But, no, they are hired by a private contractor. They don't have paid sick leave or health insurance. One woman in the group earned only $8.25 an hour after 14 years on the job.

One of their colleagues suffered a miscarriage after her employer refused to give her light duty. The next time she became pregnant, they offered her light duty, but only if she agreed to work only one afternoon a week.

Unionized workers have a different experience. One of the workers in the group was a cabin cleaner hired by Skyline, a union company. He earned fair wages, a pension, and benefits.

We know that these problems can be solved. But I want to talk a little bit about how unstable work schedules contribute to the chaotic life of many workers by telling you about Tanya in a letter I received.

My name is Tanya and I work in an assembly line in a frigid 36-degree warehouse chopping lettuce and other items to create grab'n'go foods destined for display cases in Starbucks, Costco, and Walmart.

I never know much in advance which days I will work, which hours, or even how long my shift will last. Sometimes I may be scheduled for an 8-hour shift, but get only 4 hours of work because my line's order is completed early. Other times I am at work and on my feet for 12 hours.

The unpredictability of my schedule makes it impossible for me to go back to school, which I desperately want to do, because I can't commit to any class schedule. I can't even plan a budget for rent, food or transportation because I have no idea how much money I will make in any given month.

It is terrible when I finish the order early and am sent home without working my full shift. It is even worse when I punch out and hear my supervisor say, ''We don't need you tomorrow.'' My heart sinks. It is the last thing I want to hear. I only make $9.25 an hour and sometimes I get only 25 hours a week. That isn't even enough to pay my rent.

These are stories that all of us in this Congress need to hear, to digest, to understand what the life of people in our districts is like, and we need to offer solutions that can improve their lives.

They work hard. They are not asking for much. They want good schedules. They want fair wages. They want some benefits. And, yes, even a little retirement security would be good. We could do that. We are the richest country in the world at the richest moment in history.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois. She is always a progressive voice and no greater advocate can we have.

I am now delighted to yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), someone who has been a friend for a very long time and whose work I respect and admire tremendously.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN for all of her work, particularly the work she has done in New Jersey when she was in the State legislature and now in

Congress. I want to thank the Congressional caucus for holding this Special Order on the Working Families Agenda.

Since the Republicans took over the House in January 2011, they have held hearing after hearing to make it harder for workers to form a union, they have attempted over 60 times to repeal the Affordable Care Act, they have been giving tax cuts to the wealthy, and all that time they have been wasting millions of dollars on the Benghazi Committee.

Enough is enough. The American people deserve better. We know that families across America are struggling to make ends meet. Today I am calling on my colleagues across the aisle to get to work on the responsible solutions that hardworking Americans want and need, solutions that would boost wages, help workers achieve a better balance between work and family, and level the playing field so all workers can get a fair shot at success. This is the Working Families Agenda.

This agenda would help workers like India Ford, who is from my district. During the Working Families Day of Action yesterday, she spoke to Members about how she worked nights and weekends for nearly a dozen years in the restaurant industry. As a single mom, this meant not being home for her child to help her with her homework, missing PTA meetings, and not being able to spend time with her daughter before she went to bed.

Finally, she got a new job at a new restaurant with a manager who offered to give her a schedule that worked for her family. And do you know what she did? She selected the lunch shift. This simple change was profound because now she is at home with her daughter at night. She is able to attend school events and able to help with homework.

But basic protections like fair schedules and paid sick leaves shouldn't depend on winning the boss lottery. They should be fundamental rights of every American.

Today workers are more productive than ever, but it has been a long time since most people got a raise. We need to pass legislation to raise the minimum wage. We also need to improve the National Labor Relations Act because, when workers try to organize and form a union to negotiate for a fair share, more than one-third of the time somebody gets fired during the organizational drive.

It is time to strengthen the National Labor Relations Act so that employers might think twice before they retaliate. That is what the Workplace Action for a Growing Economy, or the WAGE Act, would do.

We need to help workers better balance work and family. We need Federal paid sick days and paid family and medical leave laws, which 80 percent of the public supports. Workers need flexible schedules, schedules that work.

It is also past time that we level the playing field so that all working families have a fair shot. It is shameful that, in 2015, discrimination still shuts many workers out of good-paying jobs.

No family should live in fear of a breadwinner being fired for being gay, but Federal law still does not provide explicit workplace protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Working people deserve more than just a paycheck. They deserve a decent life. It is time to rewrite the rules to make the economy work for everybody.

Democrats stand ready to take up responsible solutions, like the Working Families Agenda, to boost wages, help workers balance family and work, and level the playing field by eliminating discrimination so that everybody has a fair shot.

In honor of National Work and Family Month, on Thursday, we will introduce a resolution calling on Congress to hold hearings and votes on the Working Families Agenda.

We already have 90 cosponsors on the resolution, and we won't stop there. For as long as it takes, we will continue to call on our colleagues across the aisle to take up the responsible policies that will help people make a better life for themselves and their families.

Again, I want to thank Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN and the Congressional Progressive Caucus for coordinating this Special Order hour and thank all of my colleagues in the Democratic Caucus who are standing up for working families.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you very much. As always, you have shared information with us which is illuminating and edifying and, hopefully, convincing of our colleagues that they shall adhere to those things that you were suggesting and recommending.

Mr. Speaker, one of the stories tonight that I have comes from Armando in New Brunswick, New Jersey. For 3½ years, Armando worked at a gas station 7 days a week on the night shift. He got one day off every 3 months. Despite working 46 hours each week, he didn't get overtime pay.

In 2007, when his wife Silvia developed eye problems that required a number of doctors' appointments, Armando's request to leave work early to help with her treatment and recovery was denied.

In order to care for his wife, Armando would come in from work at 6 a.m., leave at 7 a.m. to head to the hospital with Silvia, return home at 7 p.m., and sleep for just 2 hours before doing it all over again.

When he filed a complaint with the Department of Labor, Armando lost his job. On his way out the door, Armando's employer told him he was a good worker. He liked his work, but not the complaint.

Mr. Speaker, no one should have to endure this. No one should have to work endlessly with just 4 days off each year just to make ends meet. No one should have to choose between caring for a loved one and losing his or her job.

I would like to take this opportunity and share another story with you from New Jersey. This story comes from Josefa, also from New Brunswick, New Jersey. She works in a restaurant in the kitchen and occasionally as a cashier.

When Josefa became pregnant, she had to take 2 months off of work without pay. When she returned, she asked for the morning shift so that she could go home to be with her newborn baby.

They obliged her request, but 2 weeks later they moved her to a 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. shift. With so few hours and traveling long distances to get to the restaurant, Josefa was stuck. She asked her boss for more hours, not a raise or a handout, but the chance to work enough hours to make ends meet.

□ 1845

Despite 5 years in her job, Josefa was told that, if she didn't like it, she could leave.

In Josefa's own words: ''I was a single mom, so it was very difficult; and things like this don't just happen to me—they happen to many others. We just make enough to pay the babysitter and rent, but there are so many expenses.''

Mr. Speaker, in the greatest Nation in the world, which we are, we can—and we must—do better. We must stand up for those hardworking Americans who don't want a handout but who simply want a level playing field. We have got to stand up for those working Americans who have to work 46 hours a week, who get 3 or 4 days a year off, who are not able to make the decision to be able to care for a sick child, a sick spouse, or a sick parent.

We can do better than that. It doesn't take a lot for us to simply be decent to those who hold up our economy, who do the jobs that we take for granted every single, solitary day; but without those jobs, we would see what is lacking in our lives.

So I ask, Mr. Speaker, that our colleagues in this House—and particularly on the other side of the aisle—spend some time reflecting on what little it is they need to do to simply give our working Americans a fair shake, a fair chance, time with their families, and time to be able to bring their families into the middle class.

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

RESETTLEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to speak tonight on an issue that impacts the safety and the security of our country. There is a grave

threat to our national security that no one seems to want to talk about or to address—we talk around it; we allude to it; we look the other way or vainly hope that it will just go away—but sticking our heads in the sand will not make it go away. Instead, the threat is growing, and a lack of knowledge, foresight, and action on our part could jeopardize the future of our children and our grandchildren. The threat that I am referring to is the Refugee Resettlement Act.

Today, I want to share with my colleagues and the Nation some very important aspects of the Refugee Resettlement Program, which, I hope, will result in serious debate and in an effective reevaluation of our current refugee resettlement policies.

After events like 9/11 and the Boston Marathon bombing, you would think that America would have implemented a more rigorous screening process for allowing entry into the United States. On the contrary, as the world becomes increasingly more dangerous, significant security gaps remain.

President Obama has recently announced his plans to increase from 70,000 to 85,000 the number of refugees allowed into the United States in 2016, next year, and, for 2017, he plans to bring in 100,000. Most of the increase is from Syria and western Iraq, a direct result of the conflict of ISIS and of Mr. Obama's own weak, disjointed foreign policy.

In addition to the alarming national security concerns the resettlement program poses, there are significant costs that will be placed on the U.S. taxpayer and on State and local governments. The numbers that we have seen suggest a large economic burden on Americans, and we don't even know the full extent of all of the costs of this program.

This is why I have introduced H.R. 3314, the Resettlement Accountability National Security Act of 2015. My bill places an immediate moratorium on the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program until the Government Accountability Office conducts a study to determine the economic costs to the American taxpayer and until Congress analyzes the risks to our national security.

According to the U.S. Refugee Admissions' database, nearly 500,000 new refugees have come into the United States under the Refugee Resettlement Program since President Obama first took office. As a first-term Representative from Texas, I immediately began to investigate this issue because the State of Texas and its taxpayers have been asked to take in more refugees than any other State.

I found out that no one was asking—much less answering—the questions of who, how, when, where, and how much regarding these refugees. I also found out that aspects of this program are very hard to determine even by the government agencies supposedly overseeing it, mainly because these agencies contract and provide funding to nongovernmental organizations to administer the program and because the United Nations gets to choose the majority of the refugees who enter the United States.

Since the Resettlement Act was signed into law by then-President Jimmy Carter in 1980, more than 3 million refugees from Third World countries have been permanently resettled in the United States; and as I said earlier, nearly 500,000 refugees in just the last 6½ years of the Obama administration have been resettled by private Federal contractors across this country in over 190 towns and communities whose local citizens have little to no say in the matter.

The private government-contracted organizations that administer the Refugee Resettlement Program and choose the locations of resettlement within the United States are nonprofit groups. However, these nonprofits are paid, literally, millions of Federal dollars. I am very troubled by the Refugee Resettlement Act's cost to America.

The stark financial problems of our nearly $19 trillion national debt argue against asking the American taxpayer to take on the further financial burden of tens of billions of dollars for refugee resettlement. According to official statistics published by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, or ORR, more than 90 percent of recent refugees from the Middle East are on welfare. This is alarming from a budgetary standpoint alone.

The Congressional Research Service's memo that was issued to the Senate Judiciary Committee on the Office of Refugee Resettlement Admissions from the Department of Health and Human Services revealed that 74.2 percent of all refugees up until the year 2013 received food stamps while 56 percent received some sort of medical assistance. The very next year, in 2014, the ORR reported that 92 percent of Middle Eastern refugees were on food stamps, and over 68 percent received direct cash assistance.

According to the ORR's annual report to Congress for fiscal year 2013, the majority of the refugees who enter the United States are without any income or assets to support themselves and are given benefits paid for by State-administered programs.

Families who have children under the age of 18 are eligible for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF, program. Refugees who are older, blind, or disabled are eligible for Medicaid benefits and Supplemental Security Income, or SSI, whose trust fund right now is nearing insolvency. The Federal Government does not reimburse States for the costs or for Medicaid programs, which places a huge economic drain on the State governments. As a former mayor and local school board member, I know of the strain this places on local municipalities and school systems as well.

Refugees in certain States who do not meet the specifications listed above, such as single adults, childless couples, and two-parent families, are still eligible to receive benefits under the Refugee Cash Assistance, or RCA, and Refugee Medical Assistance, or RMA, programs for up to the first 8 months that a refugee is in the United States. While the States are reimbursed for these programs, they cost U.S. taxpayers about $302.4 million each year.

For 2013, the Office of Refugee Resettlement allocated $400 million for transitional and medical services, $150 million for social services, and nearly $50 million in targeted assistance. Along with several other allotments, the total refugee appropriation was over $620 million.

What many Americans do not realize is that refugees are eligible for lawful permanent residence, or LPR, status and for all Federal benefits after being here 1 year in the United States. In addition, if they have children born here in the United States, they are eligible for benefits as well. Robert Rector of the respected Heritage Foundation puts the cost of accepting just 10,000 Syrian refugees at more than $6.5 billion for a lifetime of costs.

Again, I ask: Is this wise for a country that is nearly $19 trillion in debt?

It sounds noble for the Obama administration to propose bringing in more refugees next year, yet there is no full accounting or transparency over what this will cost the taxpayers at the Federal, State, or local level. In a critical time when we must be economically responsible and prioritize our finite resources accordingly, allocating over a half a billion dollars for a program with unknown consequences is not the best use of our government resources.

The question at the end of the day is: Can we really afford not to take a further look at the resettlement program?

Let's also take a few minutes to examine the national security threats of this.

Perhaps even more disconcerting than the enormous costs are the numerous security risks posed by accepting refugees without properly screening or vetting them. As entire regions of the Middle East dissolve into chaos, the ability to conduct the proper vetting of refugees by verifying places of origin, political orientations, criminal records, or sometimes even basic identities is, all too often, simply nonexistent.

Already, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, FBI Director James Comey, and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson have testified under oath that they cannot properly screen the refugees who are streaming out of these war-torn areas of the Middle East.

FBI Director James Comey said he had serious concerns about bringing in refugees from conflict zones. We cannot just call up the Damascus or Libyan police department and run background checks on these refugees from conflict zones. There is already a very

good chance that, of the 70,000 refugees per year coming into the United States, terrorists and ISIS followers who are posing as refugees may have slipped through the gaps.

ISIS has promised that it will exploit this refugee crisis, and it has already, indeed, been caught attempting to do so. According to a senior Lebanese official, at least 20,000 jihadists have already infiltrated the Syrian refugee camps and are plotting to enter Western Europe. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, jihadist groups typically target European countries that have generous and liberal immigration policies and that are allies of the United States.

In line with this, the Hurriyet Daily News, in Turkey, stated this past February that the Turkish intelligence service had warned police that 3,000 trained jihadists were attempting to cross into Turkey from Syria and Iraq and then make their way into Western Europe to target countries involved in the U.S.-led anti-Islamic State coalition. What is even more alarming is that the news publication reports that some of the members of the group, including their leaders, have already entered Turkey and have already established cells of terrorist operation.

Palestinians and citizens from Syria who are between the ages of 17 to 25 have entered Turkey as refugees and plan to travel to Europe through Bulgaria in order to attack anti-ISIS coalition-member countries. In fact, one ISIS operative has claimed more than 4,000 covert ISIS gunmen have been smuggled into Western nations and are currently hiding amongst innocent refugees. He then warned ''just wait,'' according to the International Business Times.

In May, the International Business Times also cited Libyan Government adviser Abdul Basit Haroun, who warned that ISIS operatives were being smuggled into Europe by boat. Haroun said that ISIS militants are taking advantage of the crisis by using boats for their own operatives whom they want to send to Europe, and the European authorities can't differentiate between those from ISIS and the actual refugees. If this is not disturbing, then I don't know what is.

□ 1900

There are also thousands of former refugees who have settled in Europe over the past several decades now going to join ISIS in the Middle East. According to Gilles de Kerchove, the European Union's counterterrorism chief, nearly 4,000 Europeans are estimated to have left Western Europe and gone and joined ISIS.

We have even seen this in the United States refugee settlement communities as well. In Minneapolis, Minnesota, there have been 22 young Somali men that we know of since 2007 that left their new refugee home in the United States to join the terrorist organization al Shabaab.

In Somalia, they are fighting against U.S. allies and U.S.-trained troops. There are 27,000 Somali refugees in the Minneapolis area, and President Obama's plans call for thousands more.

In Texas, 37-year-old Bilal Abood is an Iraqi American who is suspected to have come to the United States as a refugee or an asylum seeker in the year 2009. When the FBI went to his home, they found evidence of ties with ISIS, including pledging an oath to its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

A former cab driver in Virginia, Liban Haji Mohamed, who came to the United States as a Somali refugee, is on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorist list for providing material support to al Qaeda and al Shabaab. He is considered particularly dangerous because he worked to recruit other U.S. terrorists for these terrorist organizations. He lived in Alexandria, Virginia, just a few miles across the river from where I am standing right now.

According to Mike Mauro, a professor of homeland security and national security analyst at the Clarion Project, a poll was conducted in November of 2014 of 900 Syrian refugees. In this poll of recent refugees, 13 percent, or roughly one out of seven, claim to have sympathies toward ISIS. Alarmingly and incredibly, that amounts to a potential 130 ISIS sympathizers.

The Immigration and Nationality Act, known as the INA, specifies that applicants for the resettlement program be subject to various grounds of inadmissibility, including criminal, security, and public health grounds.

The grounds of inadmissibility applying to refugee applicants include the broad terrorism-related inadmissibility grounds, or TRIG, in section 212 of the INA, the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Very disturbing is the fact that, beginning in 2005, the Department of Homeland Security, the State Department, and the Department of Justice began exercising their discretionary authority to waive these categories of inadmissibility for refugee applicants.

Then, in 2015, the Department of Homeland Security began implementing new additional exemptions for individuals if they only provided insignificant or certain limited material support to terrorists—this includes routine commercial and social transactions—or provided humanitarian assistance to undesignated terrorist organizations.

As of this past June, the United States Government has granted more than 15,560 TRIG exemptions to refugee applicants. That is right. More than 15,000 times the Government of the United States has waived past participation with terrorist organizations so that refugees could come and enter into the United States. This must stop.

The warning signs are everywhere of the potential of terrorist suspects posing as refugees while President Obama redoubles his efforts to bring these people in the United States and put at risk the lives and safety of the American people.

We have recently had two terrorist gunmen in Garland, Texas, who linked themselves to ISIS; the shooter in Chattanooga, Tennessee, who killed five U.S. servicemembers, recruiters; and the Tsarnaev brothers in the Boston Marathon bombing, who killed three spectators and injured an estimated 260 others. What we need to ask ourselves is: How did the Federal Government fail the American people with respect to vetting these refugees?

Of course, not all refugees are Islamic jihadists. Indeed, most are not. But the few that are pose a very real threat to the safety and security of the American people. The 9/11 terrorist attackers numbered 19, the Boston terrorists only 2.

As elected representatives, our responsibility to the American citizens and our communities should be our number one priority.

The Refugee Resettlement Program has long operated under the radar of most Americans. The average American has no idea that this resettlement program is a U.N. plan that chooses which refugees come to the United States and that the United States taxpayer foots the bill.

But as it has grown over the last few years and its implementation has become a threat to small communities, saddling them with the problems that refugee resettlement brings without their say-so and often even without their knowledge, residents in several States, including Texas, are starting to ask hard questions.

No longer satisfied with past answers, they are showing up at townhall meetings, starting blogs and email lists, digging up information and informing their friends and neighbors of what is really going on with refugee resettlement in such diverse American communities as Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota; Lewiston, Maine; Amarillo, Texas; the State of Idaho; and many other locations, just to name a few

To really see what America's future will be, we have to look no further than western Europe, which has taken in over half a million refugees just this year, not to mention the millions over the past decades.

A very popular destination for refugees coming to Europe is Sweden. The country is currently facing a large-scale refugee crisis, and the government does not know where these refugees will live, how they will work, and who will foot the bill for them.

According to Boverket, the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, Sweden needs to build half a million homes by the year 2020. This costly housing initiative will cost about $387 million a year and will only fund half of this by 2020.

Sweden is also known for its horrific rape numbers. Recent refugees—and now their Swedish-born children—are responsible for more than half of those convicted of rape, murder, and robbery.

Clearly, the existing approach to addressing the plight of refugees is simply not working. Are these really the sort of problems that we want here at home and the United States?

Again, I am not saying that brutal rapes, gang violence, and domestic terror are the norms, but, rather, they are the risks that have been seen in Europe that come along with accepting large numbers of refugees without proper vetting and screening.

While refugee crises are tragic, crimes committed by transplanted people against unsuspecting, unprotected victims in their own country are even more tragic.

The five wealthiest countries on the Arabian Peninsula—Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain—have not taken in a single refugee that we know of.

Instead, they have argued that accepting large numbers of Syrians is a threat to their safety, as terrorists could be hiding within an influx of people.

The only help so far from Saudi Arabia is an offer to build 200 mosques in Germany. It is quite apparent that the fear of importing terrorists is real for American communities if Syria's own neighbors will not admit these refugees.

My investigation of the refugee resettlement policies have also led to a concern for the most persecuted religious minority in the entire Middle East region: Christians.

Of the nine nongovernmental organizations which receive Federal grants and contracts to resettle refugees, six are designated religious charities. However, I could find no mission statements from any of them about saving Christians.

The U.N. connection could explain why so many non-Christian refugees are chosen to be brought into the United States while persecuted Christians in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and other nations there have a very hard time getting within sight of the Statue of Liberty.

In fact, the glaring shortcoming of the U.N. refugee program is that it falls short of helping one of the most persecuted groups around the world, and that is Christians.

According to reporting by Nina Shea and Elliott Abrams, the United Nations High Commission on Refugees refuses to classify Christians as a persecuted group eligible for resettlement on this basis.

Why? Because our Department of State chooses to adhere to a definition of refugees as people persecuted by their own government. The murders of Christian men, the rapes of Christian women, and the butchery of Christian children apparently do not count. These people are routinely beheaded, crucified, burned at the stake, sold into slavery, or have their property confiscated.

In Iraq, ISIS has blown up dozens of churches, kidnapped Christians and held them for ransom, even after they have already murdered them. Last summer they started marking Christian homes with a red letter ''N'' for ''Nazarene'' before they took the homes and exiled the owners.

Unfortunately, for many Christians, exile is a better option than the inhumane atrocities that many in the region are currently facing. Many are sexually enslaved by ISIS, like Kayla Mueller.

Kayla Mueller was a Christian American human rights activist from Prescott, Arizona. She was taken captive in August 2013 by ISIS in Syria after leaving a Doctors Without Borders hospital. After she was taken by the terrorist group, she was repeatedly raped by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who is the leader of ISIS.

There are still many other Christian ISIS prisoners, including 460 taken from Syria and many more who have already been killed. Many have been taken by al Shabaab in Africa. Pope Francis has even gotten involved and is calling this targeting of Christians a form of genocide.

Many Christians who want to flee persecution face the difficult decision of where to turn and where will they be safe.

A decision of how to flee and what mode of transportation to take can be critical to Christian families. It was reported this past April that 12 Christian migrants trying to get to Europe by boat were simply thrown overboard by fellow Muslim migrants and drowned.

Most are afraid to go to the U.N. refugee camps and fear the actions taken by some of their more radicalized Muslim neighbors within the camps. There are very few Christians in these camps and other non-Muslims because they fear for their own personal safety.

Unfortunately for these persecuted religious minorities, the only persons able to qualify easily for U.N. refugee resettlement are those people who are in these U.N. refugee camps. There in the camp they can be designated as priority 1 eligible by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, and then they qualify for resettlement.

This is critical to know because the U.N. refugee camps are the only source from which the U.S. will accept U.N. refugees under this resettlement act. Since very few Christians feel safe in these camps, it is apparent that this is the reason that less than 4 percent of the U.N. resettled refugees are Christians.

Former Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury said it best when he stated that this inadvertently discriminates against the very Christian communities most victimized by the inhuman butchers of the so-called Islamic State.

It is a sad reality for Christians in this part of the world right now. They are so desperate to leave that they have said that they will go almost anywhere except the U.N. camps to try to rebuild their lives.

There is another method, however, other than the resettlement act by which it is possible to admit Christians and other groups into the U.S. as refugees. The U.S. State Department has the authority to designate certain groups like Christians as priority 2 refugees, which would enable them to enter the United States without having to be living in a U.N. refugee camp.

The U.S. State Department needs to act on this immediately. It defies logic that we would want to potentially import the problems of the Middle East into the very heart of America.

□ 1915

The recent terrorist attacks in Garland, Texas; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Oklahoma City, and the Boston Marathon should serve as a dire warning.

A report submitted by the Obama administration for proposed refugee admissions says that in the year 2014 the median age of refugees from Iraq and Syria was 28 and 23, respectively, and over half of these refugees were of working age, between 16 years and 64 years of age. In fact, according to U.N. statistics, 65 percent of these Syrian refugees are military-age males, who should be defending their own country and pose a risk of having ISIS infiltrators among them.

Again, we don't need to look any further than Europe for all the evidence that we need to see the dire consequences for this program to American safety and security.

According to the Gatestone Institute, half a million known migrants and refugees came to the European Union in the first 8 months of 2015. This number will most likely reach 1 million by the end of this year, and this does not include the number of individuals who slipped in undetected.

Of the maritime arrivals in Europe, the top countries of origin are Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Albania, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, and Iraq. For the refugees who arrived by land, the top three countries of origin are Syria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

There has been much criminal activity, including multiple cases of rape, among refugee camps. On August 6 of this year, police finally reported that a young 13-year-old girl was raped by another asylum seeker at a refugee facility in Detmold, Germany. The rape actually had taken place in June, but the police had kept quiet about it for several months, not wanting to alarm the German local population. It was only after a local media outlet had published this story about the crime that it came to light.

According to German social work organizations, large numbers of women and young girls housed in refugee shelters in Germany are being raped, sexually assaulted, or forced into prostitution by male asylum seekers.

An editorial comment in the German newspaper Westfalen-Blatt said police are refusing to go public about the crimes involving refugees because they don't want to give legitimacy to criticism of the dangers of mass, unchecked migration from the Middle East.

In this refugee population, there are many elements that neither Europe nor the United States would ever invite in, and the challenge is separating them. Europe is dealing with a stark reality that it does not want to face and would prefer to turn a blind eye.

Police in the Bavarian town of Mering have issued a warning to German parents not to allow their children to go outside unaccompanied. In another Bavarian town of Pocking, administrators at the Wilhelm-Diess-Gymnasium have told parents not to let their daughters wear revealing clothes to avoid ''misunderstandings'' by the large number of refugees in their town.

These are not the only troubling actions unfolding in Germany, a country which has pledged to take more refugees than any other country in the European Union. Levels of violent crime brought about by the groups from the Balkans and the Middle East have turned certain cities such as Duisburg into no-go zones for police, according to a police report from their headquarters in the North Rhine-Westphalia region. This is the most populous state in Germany. This report states that the ability of the police to maintain public order ''cannot be guaranteed over the long term,'' according to Der Spiegel, the newsmagazine which leaked the report.

There are districts where immigrant gangs are taking over entire metro trains for themselves. Local residents and businesspeople are being intimidated and silenced. People taking trams during the evening and nighttime describe their experiences as living nightmares. Policemen, and especially policewomen, are subject to high levels of aggressiveness and disrespect.

Unassimilated refugees and immigrants have turned large sections of Europe's great cities into no-go zones where even the police will not go. Jewish emigration from France is the highest since World War II.

In the near term, nothing will change, according to this report. The reasons for this: the high rate of unemployment, the lack of job prospects for immigrants without qualifications for the German labor market, and ethnic tensions among the migrants themselves. The Duisburg police department now wants to reinforce its presence on the streets and track offenders much more consistently than before.

I am not suggesting that every refugee or even the majority of these refugees are engaged in such criminal activity. It is a very small number. But what I am suggesting is that there are some among them who have terrorist intentions that have infiltrated these communities, and it is difficult to screen them out. Even one is too many.

President Obama's plan is a potential national disaster waiting to happen. No one is saying that we should not help those who are in refugee camps. We should. America is the most generous and compassionate country in the world. We already are spending $4.5 billion in humanitarian aid, food, shelter, and medicine for these displaced persons in these refugee camps. What we should not do is endanger the American people and the safety of our children and our grandchildren.

Each of us serving in this body took an oath to support and defend the Constitution against enemies, both foreign and domestic, and ISIS has already exploited this U.N. program to infiltrate Europe. We have a sworn duty to prevent foreign enemies from entering the United States and allowing them to become domestic enemies, particularly at taxpayer expense. The President's plan and the current policy of the Refugee Resettlement Act defies all logic.

I am sure that I will be criticized and attacked for making this speech and sharing these very disturbing facts with you today, but I am compelled by the oath of office that I took when I was sworn in as a Member of the United States Congress to put the safety and security of the American people above political correctness.

I didn't come to Congress to be politically correct. I came to uphold the U.S. Constitution and to protect our national security. Protecting our American way of life, the greatest experiment in liberty and freedom in all human history, is our highest calling as elected leaders of this great Nation.

Those who criticize me for these remarks should instead turn their criticism toward those who are exploiting refugees and to the terrorists who are infiltrating these very refugees who are entering Europe and the United States.

I encourage my colleagues to further investigate the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program and to join me in calling for a moratorium on the President's proposal while we fully examine the costs to the American taxpayer and the national security implications of his policies.

Let us reassert our congressional authority over the refugee program and put the safety and security of the American people above all else. It is crucial that Congress take a look at the results of my proposed reassessment of the Refugee Resettlement Program, its cost to the American taxpayer, its threat to our national security, and its impact on our small towns and communities by passing H.R. 3314, the Resettlement Accountability National Security Act of 2015.

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

THE HONORABLE FRANK M. JOHNSON, THE HIDDEN HAND OF JUSTICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership for allowing us to have this time to discuss H. Con. Res. 84. This recognizes the works of the Honorable Frank M. Johnson, a Federal judge.

Not only was he a Federal judge, he was one of the greatest unsung heroes of the civil rights movement, a lawyer par excellence, a great student of jurisprudence, and, I would daresay, he was the hidden hand of justice in the civil rights movement.

Before continuing, however, let me just thank some additional persons. It is appropriate that I thank the six original cosponsors of this resolution. Of course, we would mention the Honorable ALCEE HASTINGS of Florida, and we thank him for signing on to this resolution. We also would like to thank the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON LEE of Texas, the Honorable GREGORY MEEKS of New York, the Honorable ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON of Washington, D.C., and I especially want to thank the Honorable TERRI SEWELL of Alabama, because Judge Johnson was from Alabama. She has signed on to this resolution, meaning that she has given her approval. I am grateful to her. She is a great, great Member of this body and has done quite well in representing the people of her district and, indeed, her State and her country. And, finally, the Honorable FREDERICA WILSON of Florida. All of these Members have signed on to this resolution honoring the Honorable Frank M. Johnson.

The Honorable Frank M. Johnson was a unique person in American history, unique in that he was one of those people that made real the great and noble American ideals: liberty and justice for all; government of the people, by the people, for the people. He truly—he truly—made justice more than a word. It meant something to him, and, as a result, people were able to benefit from justice. Justice was more than a word for the Honorable Frank Johnson.

He did not have it easy, however. He was appointed to this Federal District Court by the Honorable President Dwight Eisenhower in November of 1955. After being appointed, he immediately had a very difficult case come before him. This is when we learned of the character of Frank M. Johnson. His character was such that he refused to allow himself to be intimidated.

Over the course of his life, he had a cross burned on the lawn of his yard. Over the course of his life, and he lived for 80 years, his mother's house was bombed. It was thought that it was his home. It was bombed by the KKK. He was a person who had, as a classmate in law school, Governor George Wallace.

He was a person who probably could not have been predicted to be one of the most significant persons in the civil rights movement at the time he was appointed to the bench. There are people who, for whatever reasons, decide that they are going to do the just and honorable thing, and Frank M. Johnson was such a person.

While he lived, he had to have 24-hour protection—24-hour protection—

for his very life because there were those who saw him as a threat to the way of life that existed at that time. They wanted to end his life because of his being perceived as a threat to their way of life.

What is it about him that caused people to want to burn a cross on his lawn, that caused persons to bomb his mother's house thinking that it was his? What was it about this man that caused people to believe that he was such a huge instrumentality that was moving the South in a direction that they did not want to see it move into?

Well, he was one of those persons who actually proved, Mr. Speaker, that Black lives matter. He proved that Black lives were as important as any other lives, that all lives matter, but he proved that Black lives matter by his decisions that he made.

I indicated earlier that one of his first decisions, Mr. Speaker, was a difficult one. It was a case that involved the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. It was a case wherein Rosa Parks, the Alabama female of African ancestry, took a seat on a bus; and after taking that seat, she was required to move because, as others came on the bus who were White, she would have to move, as would any other Black person, and give White persons an opportunity to have seats on the bus. She would either have to move back or, if all of the other seats were filled, she would have to stand. She refused.

As a result of that refusal, Mr. Speaker, a civil rights movement was born in Montgomery, Alabama, and a protest movement was led by the Honorable Dr. Martin Luther King. As a result of this protest movement, many people galvanized. They came together, and they decided that they would not ride the buses and that they would transport themselves to and from work.

Well, one might think that this boycott was the reason that the bus line was eventually integrated after about a year of protestations. But, Mr. Speaker, the hidden hand of justice was the Honorable Frank M. Johnson, because he, on a three-judge panel, concluded that the Brown decision, which applied to schools, should be applied to public accommodations, should be applied to public transportation. He convinced another judge to do so, and, as a result, they issued an order that desegregated the buses in Montgomery, Alabama.

□ 1930

He was the hidden hand of justice. The protest movement was absolutely necessary, but he showed that Black lives mattered when he decided that he was going to stand for justice and that he was going to issue that order integrating the bus lines.

Later on, in the case of Gomillion v. Lightfoot, this is a case that invalidated the City of Tuskegee's plan to dilute Black voting strength.

At that time, it was not unusual for Black voting strength to be diluted such that Blacks could not get representation. We were not represented in Congress to the extent that we are today.

At that time, gerrymandering was almost commonplace to make sure that Blacks did not have the opportunity to represent constituents in city councils, and not only city councils, but in county government, as State Representatives, as State Senators, gerrymandering.

Well, it was the Honorable Frank M. Johnson that invalidated that plan that they had and ordered the redrawing of the lines.

In the United States v. Alabama, in 1961, literacy tests were required for Blacks, but they weren't required for Whites. Blacks had to take the test, which was impossible to pass, in many cases. How many bubbles are there in a bar of soap, all sorts of ridiculous things, were required of Blacks.

But this judge, the hidden hand of justice, the man who believed that Black lives mattered, required Black people be registered to vote to the same extent as the least qualified White person was registered to vote. Allowing Black people to register allowed more Black representation to manifest itself in the years that followed.

In the case of Lewis v. Greyhound, 1961, this case involved the Honorable JOHN LEWIS, who is now a Member of Congress. It involved protesting at a bus station. It involved being seated at a counter and involved desegregating the bus lines and the bus stations. JOHN LEWIS was one of several persons who were arrested, and this violated his civil rights.

It was the Honorable Frank M. Johnson that required the desegregation of the bus depots across the length and breadth of the country. By directly doing it in Montgomery, Alabama, it eventually became the law across the land.

Again he demonstrated that Black lives mattered to him, and he moved on it. He didn't just believe it. He acted on his beliefs.

In the case of Sims v. Frink, in 1962, this had to do with Alabama reapportioning. Alabama had not reapportioned since 1900. The lines had been left as they were because, by leaving them as they were, they could keep certain people from having a right to vote or having their vote really count in the scheme of one man, one vote.

It was Frank M. Johnson who required that one man, one vote, principles be utilized, giving Black people a greater voice in voting.

In Lee v. Macon County Board of Education, in 1963, this was the first statewide desegregation of schools, and it happened in Alabama. It happened because Frank M. Johnson concluded that Black lives mattered. He ordered the desegregation of these schools, and it was the beginning of something that would spread across this country.

He was a part of the avant-garde of the civil rights movement, but he did so with a pen from the bench. As a matter of fact, he did not wear a robe when he was on the bench and he did not have a gavel. He believed that, if you are a just judge and you are going to follow the law, you didn't need the robe and you didn't need the gavel. You just needed to follow the law. And he did so.

He did so in the case of Williams v. Wallace. This is a landmark case in that it involved the Honorable Dr. Martin Luther King.

As we know now, persons assembled at the Edmund Pettus Bridge. They assembled there for the purpose of marching from Selma to Montgomery. When they assembled at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, they decided that, in marching from Selma to Montgomery, they would assemble themselves at a church, and they marched from that church to the bridge.

If you have not been to the Edmund Pettus Bridge, you should do so because, as you do so, you will see that that bridge has an arch. As you move across the bridge, you can't see from the start of your movement to the bridge what lies on the other side.

But on the other side of the Edmund Pettus Bridge were men, members of the constabulary. They were on horses. They had clubs. And these men on horses, with clubs, confronted the marchers, who were peaceful. They were unarmed.

They were Black. They were White. They were multi-ethnic in terms of their ethnicity. They were persons of goodwill who only wanted to exercise their freedom of movement to demonstrate, to move from one city to another, protesting the way African Americans were being treated in the South in terms of their voting rights, in terms of their inability to receive the same treatment as others under the law.

Well, in doing this, in marching from Selma to Montgomery, when they encountered these officers with clubs, these officers beat them.

The Honorable JOHN LEWIS was a part of the march. He has said on many occasions that he thought he was going to die.

They beat them all the way back to the church where they started—all the way back to the church—blood on their heads, on their bodies, on the ground, on people, as they tried to flee and tried to fend for themselves against these members of the constabulary.

The marchers returned later to march again, but this time they had gone to court and they had appeared before the Honorable Frank M. Johnson. He issued an order requiring the constabulary to get out of the way and allow the marchers to move from Selma to Montgomery.

Few people are aware that Bloody Sunday was followed by an order from the hidden hand of justice, the Honorable Frank M. Johnson. I would daresay that that order and that movement, that march, were the basis for

the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965. It passed shortly thereafter.

The President signed it into law. As a result, many people who are in Congress today are here because that march took place and because the Honorable Judge, the hidden hand of justice, Frank M. Johnson, signed an order requiring the constabulary to get out of the way.

What is interesting about this order, Mr. Speaker, is that it was issued by his classmate, whom I mentioned earlier, Governor George Wallace. Governor George Wallace and Frank M. Johnson were at constant odds with each other. They were at odds with each other not only as it related to this march, but as it related to the integration of schools.

As a matter of fact, there were many people in Alabama who were of goodwill who started to call Frank M. Johnson the real Governor of Alabama because he stood toe to toe with Governor Wallace and, in so doing, made real what the Governor had the opportunity to do, but refused to do.

The Honorable Frank M. Johnson, the hidden hand of justice in Alabama and the United States of America.

In White v. Cook, 1966, he ruled that Blacks should be allowed to and must serve on juries in Alabama. Black people have not always had the opportunity to serve, even when the law said they had the right to serve.

As a result of not having the right to serve by virtue of the way people interpreted the law, they were denied service on juries. It was the Honorable Frank M. Johnson that permitted this to happen by his ruling.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left?

I would like to make sure that I properly cover certain materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Frank M. Johnson, in making this ruling that allowed Blacks to serve on juries, was taking a giant step forward in that he was bringing Black people into the courthouse and they were now allowed to come right in and go right in and sit up front.

Black people haven't always been able to go into the courthouse and sit on the front row. They haven't always been respected when they have been in the courtroom.

In my lifetime, I have heard African American lawyers referred to as ''Boy'' in the courtrooms of this country.

In my lifetime, I have seen African American lawyers required to wait while White lawyers were being served. In my lifetime, I have seen some things that I am not proud of.

But, in my lifetime, I have seen great changes take place, and many of these changes took place because of people like Frank M. Johnson, unsung heroes, people who have not received the kinds of accolades, the kinds of kudos, that they merit for the actions that they took and the bravery that they exhibited.

But tonight I want to make sure that at least one person who was an unsung hero gets the notoriety that he deserves. Of course, I am speaking of the Honorable Frank M. Johnson.

In 1966, United States v. Alabama, he ruled that the poll tax was unconstitutional, the poll tax. At one time, you had to pay a tax to vote. Unfortunately, that time has returned.

In my State, the State of Texas, we now have a poll tax. That time has returned. Frank M. Johnson declared it unconstitutional, giving Black people the right to vote without having to pay a fee.

Well, in my State, the State of Texas, we find now that, if you want to vote and you don't have a license to carry a gun and you don't have certain other IDs, well, you will have to then acquire an ID to vote. And while the State of Texas will provide at no cost a certain type of ID, these IDs are predicated upon your having proof of birth, a birth certificate.

I took the test myself. I went to the polls to vote, and I went to the polls without my voter registration intentionally, I might add, and I voted a provisional ballot.

I was given time to go out and acquire the proper identification. I did it knowing that I would bring the proper identification, and I did so. And I voted timely. But I did this because I wanted to see what does one go through to simply get a birth certificate.

Well, I applied for my birth certificate. I was born in the State of Louisiana. I applied for it and, to this day, I have not received my birth certificate. This was about a year ago that I applied for it. I still have not received it from the State of Louisiana. I applied for it, paid the fee.

Now, why am I saying it is a poll tax? Because in the State of Texas, if you get your birth certificate from the State of Texas, then there is a provision for indigent persons to acquire the certificate and the ID and you can do this without a fee.

But if you are from out of state, you have got to pay that fee to that out-of-state agency to get your birth certificate so that you can get it to the State of Texas and you can get your ID.

The point is paying for the right to vote is a poll tax. No one should have to pay to vote, no one. Frank M. Johnson outlawed the poll tax in the State of Alabama.

I pray that we have some other Frank M. Johnsons on the bench who will eventually outlaw the poll tax in the State of Texas because, to Frank M. Johnson, Black lives mattered. They mattered.

They ought to matter to other people who understand that invidious discrimination still exists, that people are finding clever ways to keep people from voting today, just as they did many, many years ago.

□ 1945

The struggle for human rights, human dignity, civil rights is not over. There are still challenges before us. There are still people who are in high places who are making it difficult for people to vote.

I thank God for the Frank M. Johnsons of the world who are willing to stand for justice and make it possible for people to have the same right to vote as other people have had in this country for many years.

I know that there are some who would say: ''Well, you have got the right to vote; you ought to have an ID.'' Well, I don't have a problem with people having an ID. I do have a problem when you have to pay for that ID so that you can vote. Voting is separate, and it is sacred in this country. We ought not require people to have to pay a fee to acquire an ID so that they can vote.

So he declared the poll tax unconstitutional in 1966.

In 1970, in Smith v. the YMCA of Montgomery, he ordered the desegregation of the Montgomery chapter of the YMCA.

The YMCA has not always had its doors open to Blacks, and many of the institutions in this country who did open doors opened only the back door. I know. I have been to the back doors. I know what it is like to go to a bus station and have to go to the back door. I know what it is like to go to a food service establishment and have to go to the back door to get your food. I have been there. I know what it is like to travel across country and to have to pick your places to stop because in certain places it was known that you were not permitted to stop; and in those places where you were permitted to stop, you would have to use back doors a good amount of the time.

So I know what discrimination looks like. I have seen the face of discrimination, and I understand how it hurts people. I understand the pain that is inflicted upon people. I am proud that we can now go through front doors because of judges like Frank M. Johnson, who had the courage to order the desegregation of public accommodation facilities in this country. I am so proud that there are unsung heroes who took a stand when others would simply conclude that this is not the right time, the country is not ready.

There were many other judges who could have taken the same position that Frank M. Johnson took, but they didn't do so. It takes courage to do the righteous thing. Frank M. Johnson was a righteous person, and he had the courage to do the righteous thing.

In the case of the NAACP v. Dothard, which required Alabama to hire one Black State trooper for every White State trooper, which was to be done until parity was achieved, it was the Honorable Frank M. Johnson that ordered this be done.

Frank M. Johnson understood the necessity to have the DPS in Alabama

demonstrate diversity. He understood that if you have a diverse police department, Department of Public Safety, that you are going to get people there who can help other people be better people. It was by doing this that we got more Blacks into the Department of Public Safety in Alabama and, as a result, across the country later on. He had the courage to do this because he knew that Black lives matter.

Now, this is not to say that only a certain color of person is going to make a good peace officer, not true. People of all hues, of all ethnicities, of all races, of all creeds can make good peace officers. But there are some who are not good, and those have to be removed from their positions. You ought not have people who don't respect all people, but especially at this time when we are seeing so many things happen to Black people, that don't understand that Black lives matter.

I cannot resist the temptation to avoid speaking about what happened to that young girl in South Carolina. I think the sheriff did the right thing. He has removed that officer from his department. But there is something about that case that I think we need to talk about very briefly, tersely, this: If the camera's eye had not been there, I conclude, I prognosticate, he would not have been fired. He would not have been fired without the camera's eye.

The sheriff, himself, said that two adults who were there, who saw what happened—two adults, one a teacher—said they thought the officer's behavior was correct. They didn't have a problem with the officer's behavior. It was the eye of the camera, Mr. Speaker, that made the difference. The camera brings to us what we cannot acquire when we get people with conflicting stories about what happened. We had an opportunity to see for ourselves what happened.

This is why we need body cameras. This is why Congressman CLEAVER and I have introduced the CAM TIP Act in this Congress, so that people across the length and breadth of this country can be protected who are officers. If they have the body camera on, you have the evidence of what occurred. Citizens are protected. Officers can't have these frivolous charges made real. They will help both officers and citizens.

Body cameras make a difference. They are not the panacea; they are not the silver bullet; they won't be the end-all; but they will be a means by which we will have additional evidence of what actually occurred. And many times that evidence is going to be much more potent, much more revealing than what people will say when they have conflicting stories.

I believe we ought to do all that we can to help the municipalities, the police departments across the length and breadth of this country acquire these body cameras, because these body cameras will make a difference in the lives of people.

In this case in South Carolina, if not but for the eye of the camera, I conclude we would have different results because you had two adults who proclaimed the actions of the officer to be appropriate.

It was Frank M. Johnson who declared that there should be parity in the DPS in Alabama.

Finally, I want to mention this case. It is the case of a 39-year-old White female, Viola Liuzzo, who came down to Alabama to do what she thought was the righteous thing and help in the civil rights movement. She was murdered by the KKK. And after an informant in the KKK revealed the identities of the culprits, and when they were brought to trial with overwhelming evidence, in the first trial, there was a hung jury. In the second trial, an all-White jury acquitted the officers. In the third trial, before the Honorable Frank M. Johnson, they were all found guilty, but they were not found guilty without the judge requiring the jury to deliberate at length. He may have been one of the first to give what is known as an Allen charge today, requiring the jurors to continue to deliberate notwithstanding their belief that they had exhausted all of their options. He required them to continue to deliberate; and, as a result, these three members of the KKK were found guilty. After having been found guilty, they were each sentenced to 10 years.

So I am honored tonight to have brought to the attention of this august body, to the attention of our State of Texas, to the attention of the United States of America the many, many exploits positive of Frank M. Johnson. I pray that this resolution will pass in the Congress of the United States of America for this unsung hero who understood that Black lives matter.

Mr. Speaker, I believe my time is up, and I am honored that you were gracious enough not to remove me from the microphone. Thank you for the additional time. God bless you.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HUDSON (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of attending a funeral.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 3819. An act to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, October 29, 2015, 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:

3288. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Importation of Fresh Peppers From Ecuador Into the United States [Doc. No.: APHIS-2014-0086] (RIN: 0579-AE07) received October 26, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Agriculture.

3289. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final regulations — Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Direct Grant Programs (RIN: 1890-AA19) received October 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3290. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final regulations — Student Assistance General Provisions, Federal Family Education Loan Program, and William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program [Docket ID: ED-2014-OPE-0161] (RIN: 1840-AD18) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3291. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's final regulations — Program Integrity and Improvement [Docket ID: ED-2015-OPE-0020] (RIN: 1840-AD14) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

3292. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Schedules of Controlled Substances: Table of Excluded Nonnarcotic Products: Vicks VapoInhaler [Docket No.: DEA-367] (RIN: 1117-AB39) received October 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3293. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Protection System, Automatic Reclosing, and Sudden Pressure Relaying Maintenance Reliability Standard [Docket No.: RM15-9-000, Order No. 813] received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3294. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Schedules of Controlled Substances: Table of Excluded Nonnarcotic Products: Nasal Decongestant Inhaler/Vapor Inhaler [Docket No.: DEA-409] (RIN: 1117-ZA30) received October 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3295. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State,

transmitting a report by the Department on progress toward a negotiated solution of the Cyprus question covering the period of June 1 through July 31, 2015, pursuant to Sec. 620C(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and in accordance with Sec. 1(a)(6) of Executive Order 13313; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3296. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule — Prevailing Rate Systems; Special Wage Schedules for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Flood Control Employees of the Vicksburg District in Mississippi (RIN: 3206-AN17) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3297. A letter from the Deputy Director, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Change of Address for the Interior Board of Indian Appeals received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3298. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Special Regulations, Areas of the National Park System, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Horse Management [NPS-KLGO-19374; PPAKKLGOL0, PPMPRLE1Z.L00000] (RIN: 1024-AE27) received October 26, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

3299. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting the report on the administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 for the six month period ending December 31, 2014, pursuant to Sec. 11 of the Foreign Agents Registration Act, as amended (22 U.S.C. 621); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3300. A letter from the Federal Liaison Officer, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes to Facilitate Applicant's Authorization of Access to Unpublished U.S. Patent Applications by Foreign Intellectual Property Offices [Docket No.: PTO-P-2014-0012] (RIN: 0651-AC95) received October 26, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3301. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Lockheed Martin Corporation/Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2015-1419; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-183-AD; Amendment 39-18279; AD 2015-20-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3302. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Honeywell International Inc. Turboprop Engines (Type Certificate previously held by AlliedSignal Inc., Garrett Engine Division; Garrett Turbine Engine Company; and AiResearch Manufacturing Company of Arizona) [Docket No.: FAA-2012-0913; Directorate Identifier 2012-NE-23-AD; Amendment 39-18261; AD 2015-18-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3303. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2015-0677; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-244-AD; Amendment 39-18289; AD 2015-20-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3304. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Dassault Aviation Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2015-0934; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-030-AD; Amendment 39-18287; AD 2015-20-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3305. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0656; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-224-AD; Amendment 39-18295; AD 2015-21-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3306. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Lycoming Engines Fuel Injected Reciprocating Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2007-0218; Directorate Identifier 92-ANE-56-AD; Amendment 39-18269; AD 2015-19-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3307. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; M7 Aerospace LLC Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2015-2207; Directorate Identifier 2015-CE-003-AD; Amendment 39-18272; AD 2015-19-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3308. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; PILATUS AIRCRAFT LTD. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2015-2775; Directorate Identifier 2015-CE-021-AD; Amendment 39-18277; AD 2015-19-15] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3309. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0773; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-068-AD; Amendment 39-18271; AD 2015-19-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3310. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2015-0494; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-160-AD; Amendment 39-18275; AD 2015-19-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3311. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (formerly Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH) (Airbus Helicopters) Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2012-0503; Directorate Identifier 2011-SW-032-AD; Amendment 39-18276; AD 2015-19-14] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3312. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Piaggio Aero Industries S.p.A. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2015-2466; Directorate Identifier 2015-CE-018-AD; Amendment 39-18273; AD 2015-19-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3313. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0929; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-118-AD; Amendment 39-18274; AD 2015-19-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3314. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Poplarville-Pearl River County Airport, MS [Docket No.: FAA-2012-1210; Airspace Docket No.: 12-ASO-42] received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3315. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Mackall AAF, NC [Docket No.: FAA-2015-3057; Airspace Docket No.: 15-ASO-9] received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3316. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class C Airspace; Portland International Airport, OR [Docket No.: FAA-2015-2905; Airspace Docket No.: 15-AWA-3] (RIN: 2120-AA66) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3317. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace for the following Nebraska towns: Albion, NE; Bassett, NE; Lexington, NE [Docket No.: FAA-2015-0841; Airspace Docket No.: 15-ACE-3] received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3318. A letter from the Regulatory Ombudsman, FMCSA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — General Technical, Organizational, Conforming, and Correcting Amendments to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations [Docket No.: FMCSA-2015-0207] (RIN: 2126-AB83) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3319. A letter from the Senior Assistant Chief Counsel for Hazmat Safety Law, PHMSA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Hazardous Materials: Special Permit and Approvals Standard Operating Procedures and Evaluation Process [Docket No.: PHMSA-2012-0260 (HM-233E)] (RIN: 2137-AE99) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3320. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, Regulations Officer, FHWA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Design Standards for Highways [Docket No.: FHWA-2015-0003] (RIN: 2125-AF67) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3321. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Request for Comments on Definitions of Section 48 Property [Notice 2015-70] received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3322. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB rule — Morehouse v. Commissioner, 769 F.3d 616 (8th Cir. 2014), rev'g 140 T.C. 350 (2013) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3323. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Update for Weighted Average Interest Rates, Yield Curves, and Segment Rates [Notice 2015-71] received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3324. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Supplement to Rev. Proc. 2014-64, Implementation of Nonresident Alien Deposit Interest Regulations (Rev. Proc. 2015-50) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3325. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Applicable Federal Rates — November 2015 (Rev. Rul. 2015-22) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3326. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — 2015 National Pool (Rev. Proc. 2015-49) received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

3327. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Listing Notice for Basket Option Contacts [Notice 2015-73] received October 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Added by Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 2643. A bill to direct the Attorney General to provide State officials with access to criminal history information with respect to certain financial service providers required to undergo State criminal background checks, and for other purposes (Rept. 114–316, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 2510. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify and make permanent bonus depreciation; with an amendment (Rept. 114–317, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on the Budget discharged from further consideration. H.R. 2510 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, and ordered to be printed.

The Committee on the Judiciary discharged from further consideration. H.R. 2643 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, and ordered to be printed.

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. CARTER of Georgia (for himself and Mrs. TORRES):

H.R. 3842. A bill to improve homeland security, including domestic preparedness and response to terrorism, by reforming Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers to provide training to first responders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LAMBORN:

H.R. 3843. A bill to authorize for a 7-year period the collection of claim location and maintenance fees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, and 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. JODY B. HICE of Georgia:

H.R. 3844. A bill to establish the Energy and Minerals Reclamation Foundation to encourage, obtain, and use gifts, devises, and bequests for projects to reclaim abandoned mine lands and orphan oil and gas well sites, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. YOUNG of Iowa:

H.R. 3845. A bill to amend the Federal Crop Insurance Act to repeal the changes regarding the Standard Reinsurance Agreement enacted as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. NEAL, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. TURNER, Mr. KIND, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. REED):

H.R. 3846. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. HUNTER):

H.R. 3847. A bill to provide for reforms of the Export-Import Bank of the United States; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BENISHEK (for himself and Mrs. DINGELL):

H.R. 3848. A bill to reaffirm and clarify the Federal relationship of the Burt Lake Band as a distinct federally recognized Indian Tribe, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California:

H.R. 3849. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to ensure access to qualified acupuncturist services for military members and military dependents, to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure access to acupuncturist services through the Department of Veterans Affairs, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage of qualified acupuncturist services under the Medicare program; to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the appointment of qualified acupuncturists as officers in the commissioned Regular Corp and the Ready Reserve Corps of the Public Health Service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, Veterans' Affairs, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. NORTON, Mr. POCAN, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. JONES):

H.R. 3850. A bill to provide for additional protections and disclosures to consumers when financial products or services are related to the consumers' military or Federal pensions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, Armed Services, and Oversight and Government Reform, 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. GENE GREEN of Texas:

H.R. 3851. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize appointment of Doctors of Chiropractic to regular and reserve corps of the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HIGGINS (for himself and Mr. HANNA):

H.R. 3852. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to conduct a study on the benefits of solar net energy metering, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. MOORE:

H.R. 3853. A bill to provide the Attorney General with greater discretion in issuing Federal firearms licenses, and to authorize temporarily greater scrutiny of Federal firearms licensees who have transferred a firearm unlawfully or had 10 or more crime guns traced back to them in the preceding 2 years; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. O'ROURKE:

H.R. 3854. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require all political committees to notify the Federal Election Commission within 48 hours of receiving cumulative contributions of $1,000 or more from any contributor during a calendar year, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. QUIGLEY (for himself, Mr. FORBES, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. RENACCI):

H.R. 3855. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require the Secretary of the Treasury to provide each individual taxpayer a receipt for an income tax payment which itemizes the portion of the payment which is allocable to various Government spending categories; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. RENACCI (for himself and Mr. CARNEY):

H.R. 3856. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a safe harbor for de minimis errors on information returns and payee statements; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CHABOT:

H. Con. Res. 88. Concurrent resolution reaffirming the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances as the cornerstone of United States-Taiwan relations; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. KING of Iowa (for himself, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. RIGELL, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. PALMER, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. WALKER, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, and Mr. BURGESS):

H. Res. 500. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the State of Israel has the right to defend itself against Iranian hostility and that the House of Representatives pledges to support Israel in its efforts to maintain its sovereignty; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. AMODEI:

H. Res. 501. A resolution expressing the sense of the of House of Representatives that the United States postal facility network is an asset of significant value and the United States Postal Service should take appropriate measures to maintain, modernize and fully utilize the existing post office network for economic growth; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Mr. COHEN, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. BLUMENAUER):

H. Res. 502. A resolution honoring the life, legacy, and example of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the 20th anniversary of his death; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

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. CARTER of Georgia:

H.R. 3842.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department of Officer thereof.

By Mr. LAMBORN:

H.R. 3843.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, section 3, clause 2 and Article I, section 8, clause 18

By Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia:

H.R. 3844.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, section 3, clause 2 and Article I, section 8, clause 18

By Mr. YOUNG of Iowa:

H.R. 3845.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution, Congress has the authority to regulate commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 3846.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution. he Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ISSA:

H.R. 3847.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. BENISHEK:

H.R. 3848.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8 Clause 3 of the Constitution

By Ms. JUDY CHU of California:

H.R. 3849.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 3850.

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 Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas:

H.R. 3851.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. HIGGINS:

H.R. 3852.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Ms. MOORE:

H.R. 3853.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8.

By Mr. O'ROURKE:

H.R. 3854.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 4 of Article I of the Constitution:

The times, places and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each state by the legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by law make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of choosing Senators.

By Mr. QUIGLEY:

H.R. 3855.

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; as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. RENACCI:

H.R. 3856.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1:

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18:

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 140: Mr. CULBERSON.

H.R. 184: Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina.

H.R. 209: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN and Mr. MCNERNEY.

H.R. 213: Mr. HIMES.

H.R. 271: Ms. DUCKWORTH,

H.R. 282: Mrs. DINGELL.

H.R. 381: Mr. SERRANO.

H.R. 452: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.

H.R. 546: Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. WHITFIELD, and Mr. CULBERSON.

H.R. 592: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania and Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 664: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 703: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia and Mr. LAMALFA.

H.R. 932: Mr. GALLEGO.

H.R. 938: Ms. BORDALLO.

H.R. 953: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. TURNER.

H.R. 985: Mr. CÁRDENAS.

H.R. 987: Mr. NUGENT.

H.R. 1002: Mr. TURNER and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 1062: Mr. ZELDIN.

H.R. 1089: Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 1150: Mr. HANNA.

H.R. 1197: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 1220: Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 1258: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Ms. KAPTUR, and Ms. ADAMS.
H.R. 1301: Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 1401: Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 1475: Mr. KATKO, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, and Mrs. BLACK.
H.R. 1478: Mr. DELANEY.
H.R. 1492: Mr. FATTAH.
H.R. 1516: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina and Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1517: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 1549: Mr. ROKITA.
H.R. 1550: Mr. WILLIAMS.
H.R. 1603: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 1608: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1610: Mr. LAHOOD.
H.R. 1672: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. NEAL, and Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 1688: Ms. DUCKWORTH.
H.R. 1709: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 1728: Mr. FATTAH, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. KIND, Ms. EDWARDS, and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 1786: Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H.R. 1814: Ms. MENG, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 1886: Mr. CRAMER.
H.R. 1942: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 1961: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 2050: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 2156: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.
H.R. 2169: Mrs. DINGELL.
H.R. 2185: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.
H.R. 2241: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 2293: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut and Mr. CASTRO of Texas.
H.R. 2375: Mr. FATTAH
H.R. 2382: Mr. GRAYSON.
H.R. 2418: Mr. JOLLY.
H.R. 2434: Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 2449: Mr. BERA.
H.R. 2450: Mr. FATTAH.
H.R. 2515: Ms. MATSUI and Mr. EMMER of Minnesota.
H.R. 2546: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 2612: Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 2623: Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 2646: Mr. JOLLY.
H.R. 2656: Mr. SABLAN.
H.R. 2657: Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, and Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 2660: Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. RUSH, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. MENG, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. AGUILAR.
H.R. 2689: Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.
H.R. 2754: Mr. PAULSEN.
H.R. 2759: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 2802: Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 2858: Mr. VARGAS and Mr. MEEHAN.
H.R. 2880: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. CLAY, Mr. FATTAH, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. BASS, Mr. JEFFRIES, and Mr. BUTTERFIELD.
H.R. 2894: Mr. ZINKE.
H.R. 2896: Mr. JOYCE.
H.R. 2903: Mr. HOLDING and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 2915: Mr. ASHFORD.
H.R. 2932: Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 2962: Mr. VARGAS, Mr. GRAYSON, and Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.
H.R. 2978: Mr. COOPER.
H.R. 3041: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 3046: Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 3055: Mr. EMMER of Minnesota.
H.R. 3067: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 3071: Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 3084: Mr. HIMES.
H.R. 3119: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina and Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 3126: Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 3183: Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia and Mr. CRENSHAW.
H.R. 3216: Mr. OLSON and Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 3222: Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina.
H.R. 3225: Mr. HASTINGS.
H.R. 3229: Ms. TITUS, Mr. ROTHFUS, and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 3237: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 3268: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. TIPTON, and Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California.
H.R. 3314: Mr. ROE of Tennessee and Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 3323: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 3326: Mr. BLUM and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 3339: Ms. MOORE, Mr. FARR, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. COHEN, and Ms. EDWARDS.
H.R. 3399: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia and Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 3423: Mr. KATKO, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. HURT of Virginia.
H.R. 3471: Ms. MCSALLY, Ms. KUSTER, and Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 3484: Mr. BECERRA.
H.R. 3488: Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. RIGELL, and Mr. ABRAHAM.
H.R. 3514: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. GRAYSON, and Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 3516: Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia, Mr. GROTHMAN, and Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
H.R. 3534: Mr. ZINKE.
H.R. 3535: Mr. CROWLEY.
H.R. 3542: Mr. NOLAN and Mr. HASTINGS.
H.R. 3543: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 3549: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 3556: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. PIERLUISI, and Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 3580: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 3621: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 3632: Ms. TSONGAS and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3652: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 3658: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 3664: Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 3666: Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. JEFFRIES, and Mr. GIBSON.
H.R. 3696: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
H.R. 3706: Mr. MARINO.
H.R. 3729: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 3751: Mr. HASTINGS and Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H.R. 3756: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 3765: Mr. MULVANEY.
H.R. 3770: Mr. COHEN and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 3776: Mr. GRIFFITH.
H.R. 3781: Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 3782: Mr. JEFFRIES.
H.R. 3783: Mr. JEFFRIES.
H.R. 3786: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 3799: Mr. MASSIE.
H.R. 3800: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 3802: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. BOUSTANY, and Mr. WALBERG.
H.R. 3803: Mr. MULVANEY.
H.R. 3804: Mr. BROOKS of Alabama and Mr. MEADOWS.
H.R. 3805: Mr. POMPEO.
H.R. 3815: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 3841: Ms. LEE, Mr. HONDA, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. MOORE, Ms. HAHN, and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.J. Res. 48: Mr. CAPUANO.
H.J. Res. 50: Mr. MULVANEY.
H.J. Res. 70: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. LAMALFA, and Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas.
H.J. Res. 71: Mr. LATTA, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. BARTON, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. FLORES, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. OLSON, Mr. HUDSON, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Mr. HARPER, Mr. LONG, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. BARR.
H.J. Res. 72: Mr. LATTA, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. BARTON, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. FLORES, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. OLSON, Mr. HUDSON, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Mr. HARPER, Mr. LONG, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. BARR.
H. Con. Res. 59: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H. Res. 32: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. FOSTER.
H. Res. 110: Ms. SPEIER.
H. Res. 265: Ms. MENG.
H. Res. 346: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. SIRES, and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H. Res. 386: Mr. TAKANO.
H. Res. 393: Mr. NADLER and Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H. Res. 416: Ms. EDWARDS.
H. Res. 428: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. FARR, and Ms. NORTON.
H. Res. 467: Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Ms. MOORE.

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Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, who remembers the weary, lift Your hand and we shall live. You are King forever, hearing the desires of the discouraged and encouraging them.

Today, lead our Senators, and may their labors honor You. Use their talents to bring concord to Capitol Hill. Lord, make our lawmakers instruments of Your prevailing providence. Give them a spirit of peace, even in the midst of life's storms. May they follow Your example of sacrificial service, striving to commit themselves to justice and truth. Place Your truth in their minds, Your love in their hearts, and Your compassion on their lips.

Lord, make us all instruments of Your will on Earth, upholding us with Your righteous right hand.

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

CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION SHARING BILL AND FISCAL AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate voted overwhelming to pass another piece of important legislation for our country. By a vote of 74 to 21, the Senate said yes to protecting the private information of every American. The significant bill we passed would do so through the sharing of threat information from cyber attacks.

It couldn't have passed without the hard work of Senators from both sides of the aisle. I particularly thank Senator MCCAIN, Senator RON JOHNSON, and Senator TOM CARPER, who worked hard to move this bill forward. I appreciate in particular the outstanding work of our chairman, Senator BURR from North Carolina, and our vice chair, Senator FEINSTEIN from California. They worked together seamlessly to move this challenging bill forward.

It is worth noting something the vice chair recently said. She said: ''One of the things I've learned from two prior bills of this type is that if you really want to get a bill done, it's got to be bipartisan—particularly a bill that's technical and difficult and hard to put together.''

After watching the Senate fail to act on cyber threat information sharing for years, the new Senate majority resolved to move forward instead. As our Democratic colleague from California put it, ''We stood shoulder to shoulder and the right things happened.''

Yesterday's bipartisan vote was an important step forward for our country. It represents the new Senate's latest notable accomplishment on behalf of the American people. We remain determined to keep pushing ahead as Congress continues its work to send a strong cyber security bill to the President's desk.

On another matter, the House will soon consider the fiscal agreement. After the House acts, the Senate will take up the measure. Republicans approached the recent fiscal negotiations with several goals: No. 1, reject the tax increases proposed by Democrats; No. 2, secure long-term savings via structural entitlement reforms; and No. 3, protect our troops and strengthen national security. The agreement pending before the House meets those goals. It is not perfect—far from it—but here is what we know: It is offset with other cuts and savings. It would enact the most significant reform to Social Security since 1983, resulting in $168 billion in long-term savings. It would repeal more of ObamaCare. It would provide greater certainty to our military planners to help ensure readiness and preparedness for our troops.

At a time of diverse and challenging global threats, when we see ISIL consolidating gains in Iraq and Syria and Russian aircraft flying over Syria as the forces of Assad march alongside Iranian soldiers and Hezbollah militias, the importance of this cannot be overstated.

Our All-Volunteer Force loyally goes into harm's way, and our commanders tell us that additional resources are required to ensure their safety and preparedness.

I urge my colleagues to consider these important issues as they continue to examine the agreement. We plan to consider it after the House acts.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, our goals regarding the budget agreement were to make sure that we got rid of sequestration—we did that for 2 years—and that we had a treatment in this legislation where defense, which is so important to our country, is treated no better or no worse than nondefense. We accomplished that.

We are months behind in the appropriations process because the Republican leader decided he was going to

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

push forward and not take care of the middle class. I was stunned—I shouldn't say that. That is not appropriate. I was not surprised when the Republican leader laid out his goals for his budget agreement—not a single word about the middle class.

I compliment the negotiators for coming up with something that is really good. It is a 2-year deal that allows more money to be spent for defense and nondefense, and it doesn't affect the deficit in any way. It is a good agreement.

Before we start the backslapping and congratulations, let's make sure that we, first of all, pass the budget agreement. I think we will. I was happy to see the new Speaker-to-be came out for the budget agreement today. He complained about it yesterday, and when he was reminded that it was the same pattern he and Senator MURRAY came up with 2 years ago, I guess he changed his mind. He said now he is in favor of this. I think that is good, that Congressman RYAN said that.

After we pass the budget framework by December 11, we have to make sure the appropriators are able to move forward on legislation that takes into consideration the budget agreement we have. I am certain that can be done, but it is not a given based on all of the finger-pointing by the Republicans.

This is a significant agreement. I repeat: We have relief from the vexatious sequestration. We have dollar-for-dollar help for the middle class as well as defense. There are no destructive riders in this.

When we work together, as we are supposed to do—as the Republican leader just mentioned—on legislation, it works out well.

I would suggest this. We had the House of Representatives yesterday, after years of refusing to move forward on an important piece of legislation—that is, to reestablish the Import-Export Bank. It only came about as a result of courageous Republicans saying: We have had enough of this.

This is one of the most important business-directed initiatives we have here, and it has been held up for years in the House of Representatives. It was because of these courageous Republicans who said: We have had enough of this. And they joined with Democrats to do what is rarely done in the House of Representatives. They signed a discharge petition—getting more than 218 votes—to say: We have had enough of this stalling; we want to move forward. And they did. Yesterday, that passed by a vote of 313 votes. That is a tremendous push.

I hope that over here the Republican leader will move forward on this now. There are stories coming out every day about American companies that are moving their businesses overseas because the Export-Import Bank is gone. It creates 160,000 jobs for people to work in this industry. It is important to our country. Right now, businesses are moving out of the United States because this legislation never came forward. The Bank had to close. It is basically closed right now.

I hope that we are not going to wait for some package deal with the highway bill. The highway bill should stand or fall on its own merits.

We are pleading with the Republicans to allow us to have a vote on this. We have Republicans who will vote with us. Virtually every Democrat will vote for it. We should get it done this week. Every day it is held up is a bad day for the American business community.

I ask the Chair to announce the business for today.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12 noon, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The assistant Democratic leader.

THE BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is possible this week that we will pass a budget agreement for the fiscal year we are currently in. That year started October 1 and runs, of course, until the end of December in the next calendar year. If we do reach that agreement—and I hope we do—it is going to give us some opportunities. One opportunity it will give us is to spare ourselves the possibility of this Congress failing to enact a new budget ceiling to basically guarantee the full faith and credit of the United States of America. We won't face that showdown. Also, the possibility of a government shutdown will be relieved by the passage of this budget agreement.

Those are good, positive things for this institution and for the economy of America, but there are specifics that also need to be noted because this budget agreement gives us a chance to invest in areas of our budget that sadly would have been overlooked if we hadn't reached this agreement.

This morning we had an extraordinary presentation by the National Institutes of Health. Twenty Senators came to hear the presentation about research at the National Institutes of Health and what it means to us. Dr. Francis Collins is the Director and is an extraordinary man. He is a medical doctor who was given the task of mapping the human genome and did it. He did it in an extraordinary way, creating new information and new opportunities.

A doctor from the Mayo Clinic explained what that meant. It meant that we have now reached a point where we can map the genome of individuals, their DNA, and we can then make decisions on the appropriate prescriptions for illnesses and diseases they face and in doing that, be more effective, save lives. That is what medical research can mean. Each of us will not only have a basic biography in our medical record—when we were born and some of the basic illnesses we have faced—but also our individual map of our DNA, which will instruct doctors when it comes to treatment of cancer, if it should strike us, or some other disease.

It is an amazing leap forward. It is a leap forward that would not be possible without medical research. Yet, in the past 12 years, we have seen a downturn in investment in medical research of more than 20 percent—more than 20 percent. It has meant that a lot of researchers have been discouraged and walked away and said there is no future in medical research. What a loss. They don't make a lot of money—many of them don't. If they don't think we are going to support them with our investment in NIH and medical research, they look in other places.

This morning we considered where we are. At this moment in time, the Senate, under the leadership of Senator BLUNT of Missouri and the Appropriations subcommittee on health and human services, has provided basically a 7-percent increase in the funding for the National Institutes of Health next year. That is a good thing.

I will say quickly that Senator BLUNT cut a lot of other areas in his bill that I think need to have help, but I hope that he will stand tall and tough when it comes to that 7-percent increase as we approach this budget negotiation. The House, conversely, did not give such an increase to NIH, but they increased the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which is a companion sister agency that is important for medical research.

We have a chance to come together on a bipartisan basis and come up with a number that gives 5-percent real growth in spending at both the National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It will pay us back many times over.

Most Americans say: What are we going to do about the cost of Medicare? Medicare is an important program to over 40 million Americans, and the costs keep going up. There are two facts that we learned about this morning and people should be aware of them: $1 out of every $5 spent under our Medicare system is spent on Alzheimer's and dementia. If we could have a means of early detection, prevention, treatment or cure for these horrible diseases, that would dramatically change the lives of millions of Americans and millions of families, and it would dramatically reduce the cost to Medicare and Medicaid.

Medicare spends $1 out of $3 for the treatment of people with diabetes. If we put the research into finding a cure

for diabetes and can alleviate the suffering associated with that disease, it not only will help lives across America, but it will save us money in our important health care programs. Investment in medical research by the United States of America has been the pillar for the world when it comes to looking to a better day for the people who live in each country.

This brain initiative, which was described to us this morning by the National Institutes of Health, needs to be funded. It is not adequately funded now. We dedicated some $350 million to Alzheimer's and brain research. It sounds like a lot of money. It is about one-third of what the researchers need. They have that many opportunities waiting to be funded. Will they all succeed? No, but that is the nature of research, and each one of them will be a good investment which will lead us to the day of prevention, treatment, and a cure when it comes to Alzheimer's.

I hope that we come together on a bipartisan basis when it comes to this budget. In this area of medical research, there is plenty of room for us to work together, and there has already been leadership shown on the other side of the aisle. We are going to help to try to move that forward, both in the Senate and in the House, on a bipartisan basis.

When I meet with people across my State—and I guess many other States—and talk about political issues, there are a lot of folks with some very strongly held opinions on one side or the other, but when it comes to funding medical research, I have found that this is the kind of issue that opens the doors. People of all political stripes agree this is a good investment for the future of America.

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it hasn't been a very good week or two for the University of Phoenix. The University of Phoenix is the largest for-profit university in the United States. University of Phoenix students cumulatively owe more in student debt than any other institution of higher education in America. The students enroll at this university, which is largely online but has some classroom experience, they sign up for a higher tuition than they would at community colleges or most universities, and when they can't finish and drop out, they still have debt, or when they finish, they may have a diploma that can't find a job.

The University of Phoenix—this private, for-profit company—receives nearly $3 billion a year in Federal Student Aid funding, but the quality of education from this for-profit school is suspect. The for-profit college and university industry is the most heavily subsidized for-profit business in America. We have seen a lot of warning signs about the University of Phoenix. We've seen how they target the military and veterans.

Paul Rieckhoff of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America said that the University of Phoenix ''is constantly reported as the single worst by far'' when it comes to for-profit colleges taking advantage of veterans.

Well, it has caught up with them. A few weeks ago the University of Phoenix was placed on probation by the Department of Defense, restricting the company from enrolling new servicemembers who used the Department's tuition assistance or spousal MyCAA programs. The Department found violations by the company, the University of Phoenix, after completing a review prompted by an investigative report from the Center for Investigative Reporting.

The article that started this investigation exposed the University of Phoenix's strategy to flout Department of Defense rules, including an Executive order meant to protect our servicemembers—men and women in uniform and their spouses—from aggressive and unfair recruiting by for-profit colleges. You see, if these for-profit colleges can sign up a member of the military or their spouse, they can bring in the money that is set aside in the Tuition Assistance program for education and training, and so they want to sign up as many members of the military and their families as they can.

The University of Phoenix avoided the rules set down by the Department of Defense by sponsoring events at military bases—not just a few but a lot. In one instance they paid $25,000 to sponsor a concert for military members and their families. They spent $25,000 for a concert? The company gave away computers and wrapped the stage in a giant University of Phoenix banner. They used official Department of Defense seals and logos on challenge coins and gave them out to servicemembers in order to show that they had some kind of close relationship with the military.

In other instances found by the Center for Investigative Reporting, the University of Phoenix sponsored resume workshops, which essentially amounted to recruiting members of the military and their family to sign up for this for-profit college. According to the article, the company sponsored hundreds of events, such as rock concerts, Super Bowl parties, father-daughter dances, Easter egg hunts, chocolate festivals, fashion shows, and even brunch with Santa, on military bases.

The University of Phoenix spent $250,000 to sponsor events over the last 3 years at one place—Fort Campbell, KY. Let's face it, these were recruitment events for the University of Phoenix, and they were paid for, by and large, with taxpayers' dollars. In the name of corporate sponsorship, the University of Phoenix could gain direct access to military bases with a nod and a wink from servicemembers. They told them they cared about the military. They also cared about the fact that they had potential students who would sign up and spend their TA benefits at the University of Phoenix. It paid off for them. The University of Phoenix is the fourth largest recipient of Department of Defense tuition assistance funds. In fiscal year 2014 the University of Phoenix received more than $20 million from these benefits. It is not surprising then that the company would be so concerned about the decision by the Department of Defense to put them on probation. It means they will lose access to millions of dollars from these military families, and it was reflected when their stock went down in value.

Since the Department of Defense took action against the company, the University of Phoenix stock value has plummeted nearly 50 percent. In its decision, the Department of Defense also cited concerns related to ongoing investigations of this same University of Phoenix by the Federal Trade Commission and the attorney general of the State of California. In fact, there are two ongoing investigations of the University of Phoenix by the Federal Trade Commission, one is related to deceptive marketing and advertising, and a second is related to safeguarding student and staff personal information.

In addition to the attorney general in California, at least two other States are also investigating the company. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and the Department of Education inspector general also have ongoing investigations at the University of Phoenix.

The Department of Defense is not alone. Many agencies, Federal and State, are investigating this major for-profit university. They do have some friends though, and one of them is the Wall Street Journal.

Last week, on the same day an editorial of a similar tone appeared in the Wall Street Journal, a few of my colleagues in the Senate sent a letter to the Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter, telling him to lay off the University of Phoenix despite the fact that the Department noted the violations were of such frequency and such scope that they were ''disconcerting.'' My colleagues in the Senate think the Department of Defense's decision to protect servicemembers and to put this university under probation was ''unfair.''

There is no question that the Department of Defense has a duty and a responsibility to protect members of the military and their families from exploitation. They have established rules under the Voluntary Military Education Program, and now my colleagues in the Senate are writing letters to the Department of Defense saying: Look the other way. The letter they sent criticized the Department for its concern over the University of Phoenix's continued participation in Voluntary Military Education Program in light of the multiple ongoing investigations. I think it would be grossly

irresponsible for the Department of Defense to back off of this protection of our military because of a letter from Members of the Senate.

The broad and ongoing regulatory scrutiny of the University of Phoenix gives the Department of Defense legitimate cause for concern when it comes to the company's future participation in the Voluntary Military Education Program.

My colleagues in their letter said: ''The TA program is critical to our nation's servicemembers' educational and career opportunities.'' I couldn't agree more. That is exactly why the Department of Defense should ignore the demand of my Senate colleagues and exactly why they should not turn a blind eye to the University of Phoenix's violations.

In order to provide quality educational options for servicemembers and to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not being wasted, we must promote integrity in the program, and the highest priority should not be the profitability of a for-profit university, such as the University of Phoenix. The highest priority is quality education and training for the members of the military. I thank the Department of Defense for taking this bold action and encourage them to remain steadfast in protecting students, military members, their families, and taxpayers when it comes to future decisions related to the University of Phoenix's participation in the Voluntary Military Education Program.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, we are on the floor in celebration of the American democracy, that occasionally things can work, and that we can overcome extremes in our country and actually pull together to do something for American manufacturers, to do something for American businesses, and to do what is right.

I know my colleague, the senior Senator from the great State of Washington, is on a short timeframe, so before I proceed with my remarks I would like to yield the floor to Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am delighted to be here with my colleague, and I thank the Senator from North Dakota for her exhilaration we all share because of the vote last night in the House overwhelmingly in support of Ex-Im.

I am here to reiterate my strong support for reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank, and I applaud the Members of the House who easily passed the reauthorization bill last night. It is actually easy to see why the bill got so much support. It is good for American jobs, it is good for small businesses, and it reduces our national debt. The fact that Republican leadership has let this program go dark for so long, held hostage by political pandering, is outrageous.

The longer Ex-Im is shuttered, the more it hurts American competitiveness. In my home State of Washington, nearly 100 businesses—the majority of them medium or small businesses—used the Bank services last year to help sell their products overseas. We are talking about everything from Apple and airplane parts to beer and wine, to software and medical training supplies. In fact, I actually recently visited one of these small businesses—a brewery in Seattle.

In 2011, Hilliard's Brewery started with three employees dedicated to making good beer. Thanks to a loan from the Ex-Im Bank, Hilliard's tapped into foreign markets and developed a following. Fast forward to 2015. They have dramatically increased their production, they continue to grow, and they built a business that thrives today.

The reality is that people in other countries want American-made products. That is great because these businesses support tens of thousands of jobs around the country and they keep our economy moving. The Export-Import Bank is the right investment because it expands American businesses' access to emerging foreign markets, creating jobs right here at home. Do you know what it costs taxpayers? Not a single penny. In fact, the Export-Import Bank puts money back into our country.

Here is the bottom line: Republican leaders allowed partisan pandering to put the brakes on a program that creates jobs, strengthens our small businesses, and helps our economy grow. I believe—and I am joining my colleagues today—it is time to put this ideology aside. Let's restart this proven program. It is critical the Ex-Im Bank continues to receive the strong bipartisan support we have seen in the past as we work to reauthorize this bill that is a success. I am proud to join my colleagues to say let's get this done.

Thank you, Mr. President, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, yesterday was a great day, and it was a great day not just because something we have worked so long and hard on actually was advanced, and that we care about, reopening the Ex-Im Bank, but it was when a majority of people in the U.S. Congress stood up, led by a Republican from Tennessee, Representative FINCHER, and actually said: We are not going to let hard rightwing politics get in the way of American jobs, American manufacturing opportunities, and get in the way of moving our country forward. I think that speaks volumes, and I hope it becomes an opportunity to move other broad bipartisan pieces of legislation forward.

The frustration the American people have with the U.S. Congress is that things that seem to be no-brainers—legislation that seems to be so obvious in terms of the right kind of policy—do not get done in the U.S. Congress. So I am elated with what happened over in the House.

Now the ball is back in our court. We have been waiting for a number of months to see House movement on this. Because of the discharge petition, because of this big vote, we now see House movement. The House has done their job. It is now time for us to do our job.

I want to point out a couple of things about that vote. It ended up being over 70 percent of the House of Representatives. Think about that. In this time of hard partisan fighting, we have 70 percent of a body agreeing to an important public policy. What also is significant about that vote is 127 Republicans—in fact, a majority of Republicans in the House—voted to support the Ex-Im Bank, reauthorize it, open it up, and open up this opportunity for American manufacturers.

There can be no debate. Along with my colleague from Washington, we have been saying all along that we believed there was broad support in the House of Representatives to do this. I think they hadn't had a test vote in the past. Now we know, and we can say it with great certainty, not only is there majority support, there is supermajority support for the Ex-Im Bank.

Now it is our turn. Now it is our job once again. A few short months ago I stood in this body, working with my two great colleagues who have joined me on the floor, to push back and say: Look, if we believe in a trade agenda, we believe as the three of us have voted, to support TPA. We are now evaluating and analyzing TPP. What sense does it make to take one of the most significant and important trade tools such as the Ex-Im Bank—something that levels the playing field and creates huge opportunities for us to be competitive against a world where these kind of private agencies are supported by every major economy and every major government, including some of the developing nations right now—what sense does it make to shut down or restrict that tool? In what world does that make sense? We have been making this commonsense argument and fighting against things that make absolutely no sense and, quite honestly, in many ways seems almost idiotic.

Unfortunately, there are casualties to this failure in America today. American jobs have been lost, American economic opportunity has been lost, and

America's position as a leading manufacturer and exporter of quality goods has been challenged because we have sent a message that we are not open for business. We have sent the message that we no longer are going to engage with the rest of the world in terms of developing and supporting exports. That is the wrong message.

I think the House yesterday sent a huge message to those foreign nationals in those countries who think we were willing to basically abrogate the ground—give the ground away to other companies from other countries. We sent a loud-and-clear message that is not going to happen on our watch.

I rise to make one final point before I ask my colleagues to join me. I will make one final point, which is this bill is going to come over from the House of Representatives. We have been having this discussion about what can we attach it to. We need to attach it to something because the House will not take it independently. Isn't that what we have been hearing; that the House couldn't possibly move this without being on a so called must-have piece of legislation. That argument is way gone. It has been blown up by the vote yesterday in the House of Representatives.

Now that we no longer have that argument and we know we have a supermajority here—at least 64 votes and probably likely 67 votes for the Kirk-Heitkamp bill—we need to move this bill now. Let's open the Ex-Im Bank. Let's tell American small businesses that we are on their side. Let's tell American manufacturers that we hear you. We hear that we can't put you in a challenging and competitive global economy and then weigh you down with 100 pounds of inactivity on the Ex-Im Bank.

We are going to be talking a lot about this in the next 2 or 3 weeks because it is not enough to wait for the next must-pass vehicle to pass through. I jokingly tell my staff I am going to introduce a bill called the vehicle and say: Here it is. The bill is ready to go right now. We are ready to make this happen. I am very excited for the Ex-Im Bank but more excited for so many of our workers, so many of our small businesses that have struggled and that have wondered why Washington cannot listen to their concerns. I think that question was answered yesterday, so I am very excited to call on my colleague from the great State of New Hampshire to also talk about the importance of the Ex-Im Bank at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am delighted to join my colleagues on the floor, Senator HEITKAMP, Senator MURRAY, and Senator CANTWELL. I thank them for their leadership in keeping the issue of reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank front and center in this Congress. We are here to celebrate what the House did yesterday in voting overwhelmingly with a bipartisan majority to reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank. The House did what many people have been predicting for months they would do if they could actually get this bill to the floor; that is, pass it with an overwhelmingly bipartisan majority, including a majority of House Republicans.

Why are we so concerned about reauthorizing the Ex-Im Bank? It is because—as Senator HEITKAMP said so well—exporting has become increasingly important throughout the country, especially in my home State of New Hampshire and for so many of our small businesses that are looking to stay competitive in this global economy. Ex-Im levels the playing field, and when American companies have a level playing field they can compete and win.

Unfortunately, it has been a small ideological minority of Members of Congress in both the Senate and the House who have kept this legislation from coming to the floor and have kept the Ex-Im Bank shut down. The vote yesterday shows it is time to change that.

Ex-Im provides billions of dollars of money to help American manufacturers reach foreign markets. It has been 4 months now since the Bank's charter expired and we are already starting to see the consequences. Some companies have discussed moving manufacturing from the United States, which means we will lose manufacturing jobs. We are going to start seeing consequences for small businesses as they start losing out on new sales because they are operating at a disadvantage.

Businesses such as Boyle Energy in New Hampshire have gotten support from the Ex-Im Bank. The Bank has supported $314 million in export sales from New Hampshire businesses since 2009. It is time for the Senate to take up this legislation, to pass it, to come together and get this done for our small businesses, for our economy, and for our jobs.

I thank my colleagues, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I thank my great colleague from New Hampshire, who has done so much in her State to raise awareness about the importance of the Ex-Im Bank and who has also stood firm with the two great Senators from Washington, the Senator from Missouri, and the Senator from Delaware to basically say: You cannot just look at trade agreements and think you got every piece of important trade legislation passed.

So she has been a champion. But we all have to admit that none of us have been as diligent, none of us have been as eloquent, and none of us have been as tenacious as the great Senator from the great State of Washington, who understands this issue so well and has been fighting for this issue for a number of years. So I yield the floor to the Senator from Washington.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I would like to thank my colleagues for coming to the Senate floor this morning to give an important message to our colleagues—that it is now time to take up the Export-Import Bank issue and pass that legislation today.

I thank my colleague from North Dakota, who has had this legislation in the Senate and has worked hard on the banking committee to make sure this legislation is moving forward and has been there at every step in the process. Being from a State that knows exports matter, she knows that having a finance regime that allows banks to take advantage of the fact that they need credit insurance has been a good thing for the American economy. It has helped us grow jobs in the United States, as we are selling exports to overseas markets. So she has been a stalwart.

My colleague from New Hampshire who just left the floor, Senator SHAHEEN—I have visited her State and facilities and manufacturers involved in aerospace and other types of manufacturing that are trying to win in the international marketplace with their products by selling them overseas.

When we cancel a program that actually helps us pay down the deficit—those individuals who get financing through a bank and a credit agency like the Export-Import Bank actually have to pay a fee. That has actually helped us reduce the deficit. It is money paid every year, and it helps us reduce the deficit. My colleague Senator SHAHEEN has been a great advocate for reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank.

As my colleagues have talked about, the dirty little secret is out in Washington; that is, you cannot pass the Ex-Im Bank reauthorization because there is not enough support in the Congress to do so. Well, the answer is, that was a bunch of hooey promulgated by some very conservative think tanks that wanted to hold conservative Republicans hostage, and then they tried to hold all of us hostage. That is right—they tried to hold all of us hostage, saying that we cannot pass this.

We know the House of Representatives, with 313 votes—a majority of the Republicans in the House—voted for the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank. They now join 67 people here who want to go to and move that legislation in the Senate. So the majority of people in both the House and Senate have supported the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank and have done so for more than a year, but we let it expire. What happened? We let down the American economy because the end result has been a loss of jobs.

I will give one example of 850 jobs that went from U.S. companies over to these countries instead because without the Export-Import Bank, they lost deals that went to other places because other countries also have credit agencies that help small and regional banks

finance the sale of U.S.-made products. As they are being sold to say South Africa or an Asian country or someplace else, the companies cannot find the financing—a lot of agricultural products—and so they come to a bank in their community and say: Help finance my sales overseas.

In fact, Senator MURRAY and I met with a great—my colleague from North Dakota will like this—microbrew manufacturer in Ballard, WA, and they said: You know, we are trying to sell into the Scandinavian market. They like our products, but we are not big enough as a distributor to finance the sale of our products into those markets. So we either have to take that on our books ourselves or find a way to take our company and leverage it with some capital to increase our market exports.

So what did they do? They tried to minimize that. Otherwise, do you know what that company would have to do? They would have to take all their capital and put it aside to leverage that money to expand the market. Instead, they said: Well, let's go to a bank and get them to loan us the money so we can expand our products into Scandinavia, where people love drinking this Ballard beer.

The bank says: Well, we like that idea. We like you. You are doing well. But we are a little afraid of your selling into that distribution market in Scandinavia. We want you to have some credit insurance.

That is what the Export-Import Bank does. It says to that banker in Ballard: We will provide you a little credit insurance.

Do you have to pay a fee for that? Yes, you have to pay a fee for that. What does that fee do? It helps the Federal Government pay down the deficit. Who wins? We all win because that Ballard company now gets to grow. I would say that over in Scandinavia, they get to drink great beer that is made in Washington State. As one of the largest hops producers in the United States, my colleague from an agricultural State understands this. So everybody wins. Then the Ballard company gets to expand jobs. So that is what this is all about.

In this instance, we lost 850 jobs.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Will the Senator from Washington yield?

Ms. CANTWELL. Yes.

Ms. HEITKAMP. One of the issues we heard so often during this debate has been that the private sector will step in, that the private sector will take on this responsibility, that we don't need to have the Export-Import Bank, that the private sector will fill the gap. Were there any cases where the private sector stepped up and filled the gap of the Ex-Im Bank?

Ms. CANTWELL. I thank the Senator from North Dakota for that question because that is the issue. What people don't understand is that there are so many of these deals that—basically there was a U.S. company that wanted to sell its ability to build bridges to an African country. Yet, because the Export-Import Bank expired, that African country ended up basically going with a competitor, an Asian competitor. Same thing here. When we don't finance these deals—I know of a deal that GE lost to Rolls-Royce. Why? Because the credit agency in Europe could finance the deal, so they just bought a different product.

The issue is not that somehow the private sector is going to step in here and basically help in a capital market. It is the same way the Small Business Administration works. The Small Business Administration has 7(a) loans to help finance the sales that basically go through Main Street banking, but the Small Business Administration provides a little certainty and predictability to the process so that we are not seeing huge losses. Basically, the Small Business Administration has not seen large defaults, and neither has the Export-Import Bank.

So these are tools that basically people try to say to us will be picked up somehow, that the private sector will respond to this. Well, in developing markets around the world, when U.S. manufacturers are trying to compete and build a great product, all you are doing by killing the Export-Import Bank is enabling some other manufacturer in Europe or Asia or South America to compete with our manufacturers on an uneven playing field. You are giving them an advantage our manufacturers don't have.

So, literally, people on the other side of the aisle have shipped jobs overseas by saying they don't want to support the Export-Import Bank, and they have held it up for so many months now that we have lost jobs. This is only one example.

There have been tens of thousands of jobs lost since the Export Import-Bank failed to get reauthorized. Now the question is, Why are we going to wait 1 more day? Now that the House has passed the bill, with a majority of Republicans supporting it, why would we wait 1 more day to pass a key tool that is instrumental in supporting jobs in the United States of America?

I hope my colleagues—I appreciate so much my colleague from North Dakota talking about this because, you know, being—I don't if it is that we are ag States, that we see how much the global economy means to our States, but we know this: that 95 percent of consumers are outside of our borders and that if we want to increase our economic activity in the United States and grow jobs, we better be selling to those 95 percent of consumers outside of the United States.

If you want to sell to those 95 percent of consumers outside of the United States, first you have to build a great product or develop a great agricultural product, but then you have to be able to have the competitive tools to reach them from a financing and banking system.

So the funny thing is that all of those people on the other side who basically act as though they are against the Export-Import Bank because they think it is some sort of mysterious organization, those are the people who basically wanted to bail out Wall Street. They are the ones who are behind the big banks. They are the ones who are trying to basically disassemble all of the banking reforms we passed to protect the American consumers. So they are not for some sort of great, good government; they basically are just looking for a trophy to put on their mantle to say that, oh, we killed this government program, which, as I have said, is wrong because it actually helps us create jobs in the United States of America, it helps U.S. manufacturers win in the United States of America, it helps us get our products to places they would not already go, and it helps pay down the Federal deficit. So it is a win-win situation for all of us.

What we have to do now is to get this reauthorized. We should not wait another minute. The notion that all of my colleagues should take away from this is that a minority of people holding up voting on this has also been wrongheaded. To allow a minority to thwart what is such an essential tool has been a mistake. What we need to do is right that mistake immediately by passing this legislation here in the Senate, get the Bank back operating, let our U.S. manufacturers and agricultural producers win again in the international marketplace, and help our economy grow with these important jobs that are related to exports.

I again thank my colleague for being down here on the Senate floor. We are not going to give up. We are going to be down here. That is because, as you know, we are having all of these budget discussions, and people should remember that over the last 20 years, the Export-Import Bank has generated $7 billion to the Treasury—$7 billion over 20 years. So not only does it help us grow jobs, it actually has helped us pay down the deficit.

I hear a lot of discussion about budget deals and transportation packages and things of that nature. So, to me, if you want to put more revenue back into our coffers, then support the Export-Import Bank immediately and you will be recognizing immediate revenue for any of these budget discussions that we are having and that we need to move forward on.

I am not under the impression that somehow all of the people in the Senate are now going to support this legislation and that it is going to move quickly, because there will still be some on the other side of the aisle who don't support moving forward. But I would say that number—$7 billion over 20 years—I think it is worth a few procedural 60-vote thresholds to get that money and to give Americans the certainty that this particular program will be reinstated and that we will be

back to letting hard-working Americans who build a great product get the credit assurances they need to sell their products on a global basis and to win in the international marketplace. That is what America is all about. Don't hold these people down. They are the people who created, with great ingenuity and great sweat, the great products that have made our country great. So let them export their products. Don't make it harder for them just because you want to win a trophy from the Heritage Foundation.

Let's get back to making sure we are making this place operate. We know the majority both in the House and Senate supports the Export-Import Bank and the jobs it creates. Let's get this bill reauthorized today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, we have been promised repeatedly since the end of June that we would be given an opportunity to reopen the Ex-Im Bank, that we would be given the tools to get the Ex-Im Bank operating and providing credit to American manufacturers.

If you had told me that the end of July would come and go without putting the Bank back in business, I would have said: That won't happen.

If you had told me that we would go through all of August and all of September without putting the Bank back in business, I would not have thought that could happen.

We are now at the end of October and, quite frankly, we are at the end of our patience—and so are American manufacturers and so are American workers. The time to deal with reopening the Bank, the time to move this legislation is right now.

The patience has run thin. The promises have never materialized in terms of moving this forward.

We were told in the very early stages, back when we began to move this issue, that the only way we could possibly get it through the House of Representatives was if it were put on a must-pass piece of legislation, something such as the reauthorization of the surface transportation bill—whether we are going to have highway bills or whether we are going to put it on the debt limit or whatever it is—because the House couldn't possibly move this legislation forward without any opportunity to put it on something else.

That myth has disappeared. That theory is no longer available. That argument is no longer available to anyone in this Chamber. So the question becomes this: Now that we know the will of the Congress, reflecting the needs of the American people, the needs of the manufacturers in this country, and now that we know what the vote count is, why can't we get this done? Why would we tell the American public that in the face of an overwhelming majority in support of a critical piece of trade infrastructure and legislation that we can't get it done, that we have to wait even more months to see the Ex-Im Bank back in business?

We will be back. We will continue to talk about this issue. We will continue to raise the concerns that we have about further delay and what that further delay is costing. But we also are extremely grateful for the work that was done in the House of Representatives against great odds to move this forward, to send a message to American manufacturers: Yes, this place can function, and we will listen to you, and we are moving forward on getting you this critical tool to keep people once again employed in your shops, to keep people once again working to export the great American products to the global economy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip is recognized.

LEGISLATION IN CONGRESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, after years of hard work the Senate yesterday passed legislation that will help keep the personal information of people safer, whether that personal information is in the hands of your bank or your credit card holder or whomever.

As we know, the threat of cyber attacks is all too real. Twenty-one million Americans lost their personal information and sensitive background information at the Office of Personnel Management just this last summer—21 million. As a matter of fact, the suggestion has been made that many of those people were individuals who filed extensive questionnaires—or responses to extensive questionnaires—in order to obtain a security clearance. So you can imagine the sensitivity of that information. That followed on a breach at the Internal Revenue Service in which the data of more than 100,000 taxpayers was stolen.

It is a felony to divulge Federal income tax information of a taxpayer. It is a felony. Yet somehow, some way, this cyber attack at the IRS was able to get data on more than 100,000 taxpayers.

The Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act is legislation that has been long overdue, and we are, frankly, behind the curve here. But this bill garnered wide bipartisan support in the Senate. Now we have the opportunity to work with our House colleagues, who have, I believe, a couple of cyber security bills, and to try to reconcile those differences in a conference committee, which is typically the way we reconcile those differences and competing ideas.

But suffice it to say that this legislation, once enacted into law and signed by the President, will help deter future cyber attacks and equip the public and private sector with the tools they need to be more nimble. Specifically, what it will do is allow companies and individuals to share information with the government without concern about losing a competitive advantage. Right now, when you are attacked in your company, obviously it is not something you particularly want to brag about, but you do need to let the people whose information has been stolen know so they can protect themselves. But what there will be is more information sharing, along with some legal protections for people who cooperate on a voluntary basis.

As Senator BURR, the chairman of the Intelligence Committee said time and again, there is nothing compulsory about this system. Nobody is forced to participate. But I think, over the long run, businesses and individuals will find it in their best interest to share this information and to receive information in a way that will help protect our personal data.

The passage of the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act was, rightly, a major priority for the Senate. As I said, I am hopeful—along with our House colleagues—that we can get a bill to the President's desk for signature soon.

But this is just one more example—the latest example, really—of the productivity of this new majority in Congress that was elected just last November. We have worked hard. Without sacrificing our principles, we have worked hard to find common ground, working on a bipartisan basis to move legislation across the floor and to get it enacted into law that serves the best interests of the American people, such as the passage of the bill to help victims of human trafficking, which passed 99 to 0 in the Senate and now is the law of the land. It was the first major effort to help the victims of human trafficking we have undertaken here in 25 years.

We have also passed out of the Senate—and we are working on differences with the House—the Every Child Achieves Act. As Chairman ALEXANDER of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee points out, this is a fix to No Child Left Behind. This legislation will devolve power from Washington, DC, back to parents and local communities so they can have a greater say in their children's education.

Once again we have learned the lesson, perhaps painfully, that a one-size-fits-all solution does not work for everyone. We are a big, diverse country. A lot of communities are better equipped—certainly they are more nimble, more flexible, and more adaptive—to change circumstances than the Federal Government. Even though we had the best of intentions with No Child Left Behind, we needed to make this necessary fix and again devolve power back from the Federal Government down to parents and local communities for their children's education while maintaining high standards at the same time.

We have also passed a multiyear highway bill. I think there were more than 30 different temporary patches of

our highway bill because of the inadequacy of the highway trust fund. When you buy a gallon of gasoline, I think about 18 cents goes into the highway trust fund out of that gallon of gasoline. Unfortunately, though, our demands have exceeded the amount of money in that fund.

For States such as mine, we are a donor State. So we send a buck to Washington, DC, and we get 92 cents back. A friend of mine in the Texas Legislature called that Federal money laundering, and I think he is right.

But we have stepped up—the voters in Texas last year, actually—by passing a supplemental appropriations for highway and infrastructure out of our rainy-day fund. Actually, on November 7, we will have another referendum in Texas to try to fill that gap between what the Federal Government is doing and what the State government can and must do in order to meet our transportation needs.

By passing a multiyear highway bill, the Senate has now prompted our House colleagues to, in turn, pass their own multiyear highway bill, and now, perhaps later today, we will pass another short extension to November 20 and then work to reconcile those two differences and then get that to the President's desk.

That is not particularly sexy work, but it is very important. It is sort of what we are supposed to do in the Congress, which is to perform the task of governing and helping to address the issues that confront everyday working American families.

Then just last week the Senate Judiciary Committee voted 15 to 5 to pass, on a broad bipartisan basis, the first criminal justice reform that we have done since the 1990s. I have cosponsored that legislation and was proud to do so. A lot of what this bill contains—particularly something called the CORRECTIONS Act—was based on a successful experiment in Texas and other States where they realized that you could lock people up for committing crimes but someday they are going to get out. When they do, we have an interest in making sure, for those who are willing, that they are prepared for life on the outside or otherwise they end up becoming what a young man in Houston just last week or so told me. He called himself a ''frequent flier'' in the criminal justice system. We know what that means. That means the turnstile just kept turning. He would get out and go right back in because he was woefully unprepared for life outside. So whether it is education, whether it is mental illness issues, drug and alcohol issues or just employable skills, it is in our interest to provide incentives to people in prison so they are better prepared when they get out.

I am not suggesting that this is some sort of panacea and that all of a sudden our prisons will be emptied and people won't commit crimes anymore. That is not true. But for those who can be saved, for people who want a helping hand and are willing to take responsibility for their own rehabilitation, I think this legislation is very important.

So while we still have a lot to do, I think we can take some satisfaction in the productivity that we have had—notwithstanding the very challenging political environment and the polarization of our politics in America today.

This week Members from both parties, as well as the White House, have been talking about legislation to deal with our budget and ensure our country meets its financial responsibilities. Indeed, there has been an announced deal, negotiated by the leadership in the House, the Senate, and the White House, which the House of Representatives will be voting on at about 5 p.m. today.

I think it is worth reminding everybody how we got to this point. Starting in June, our colleagues from across the aisle started what they advertised as a filibuster summer—in other words, a strategy to block any and all of the appropriations bills that come across the Senate floor. There are 12 of those appropriations bills. If we were doing things the way we should be, we would take them up individually. The American people could read them, understand them, and we could debate them, hopefully improve them, and then pass them into law to fund some of the basic functions of our government, such as the Defense Department, for example. It is ironic that many of these appropriations bills sailed through the Appropriations Committee on a bipartisan basis.

Well, for the first time in 6 years, the Committee on Appropriations had voted out all 12 of those bills. The reason they were able to do so is because under this new majority, we were able to actually pass a new budget, which gave the top capped spending lines to the Appropriations Committee so they could do their job to consider those spending bills, to rearrange priorities, and hopefully gain greater efficiency and economize on the spending.

So even though many of our Democratic friends voted for those bills in the Appropriations Committee, they came to the floor and voted against them to create this huge cliff that we knew was coming on November 3 and, indeed, on December 11.

Senate Democrats carried this strategy of filibuster summer into the fall and continued to block appropriations bills, turning noncontroversial funding priorities, such as our Nation's military and support for our veterans, into partisan games. That is what created this so-called shutdown narrative and drama.

It wasn't an accident; it was a premeditated plan by our Democratic friends in the minority. So, as a result, Congress was once again staring down several major deadlines with little time to waste.

I have to say that if your attitude in Congress is ''I want 100 percent of what I want or I am not going to settle for anything,'' you are not going to get anything. It is just that simple. It is just a simple fact of life that the only kind of negotiated outcomes we have here are imperfect; they are flawed.

While this budget agreement isn't perfect—it is flawed—it does contain several important priorities. First of all, the Budget Act of 2015 doesn't raise taxes. That is important to me and certainly important to my constituents. They think this administration has raised their taxes more than enough already. This agreement lays the foundation to fund the government through 2017 without a tax increase.

Importantly, the legislation repeals a section of ObamaCare. We will have more to say about that in this coming weeks, but it repeals a major section of ObamaCare that required large employers to automatically enroll their employees in the ObamaCare health plans. That is a pretty big deal for a law that has been on the books since 2010. Rolling back ObamaCare, I believe, is essential to helping the American people meet their basic needs—to get the health care they want at a price they can afford, and not based on some sort of mandate from the Federal Government. It is also necessary for the health of our Nation's economy.

Perhaps from my standpoint, and I suspect the Presiding Officer's standpoint, the single most important part of this legislation is it will fund our military and make sure our military has the resources it needs to protect us here at home and our allies around the world.

As part of the artificial drama that was created over this deal, the President of the United States vetoed the National Defense Authorization Act. This is the fundamental law by which Congress says to our men and women in uniform: We are going to make sure you have the resources you need in order to do the job you volunteered to do. And oh, by the way, we are also going to take care of our families because in the military today, with an all-volunteer military, our military families are vitally important too. But in an incredibly cynical move, the President vetoed the Defense authorization bill in order to gain leverage in this negotiated budget deal. It truly is shameful. It is inexcusable for the Commander in Chief to hold our men and women in uniform hostage by doing something like that.

We all know we are living in a world marked by insecurity at every corner, from rampant instability in the Middle East to a newly aggressive Russia in Eastern Europe and in the Arctic, and a rising China that continues to—Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 more minutes.

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

Mr. CORNYN. In addition to instability in the Middle East and an aggressive Russia in Eastern Europe and in the Arctic, a rising China is trying

to expand its own territory at the expense of our allies and friends in the Pacific.

I am glad to see the U.S. Navy challenge the phony claims of China in the South China Sea that jeopardize those important sea lanes that are so critical to our security and to our commerce.

So this deal, as flawed as it is, finally provides the military and our military families with the resources they need in order to do the incredibly important job we ask them to do. If you think about all the areas that the Federal Government is involved in, this is the No. 1 priority. There is no ''Yellow Pages'' where you can look to outsource national security. It is the Federal Government's responsibility, and it is about time we provided our men and women in uniform with the resources they need in order to get the job done.

In conclusion, this bill actually takes significant steps in reforming, in a fiscally responsible manner, our Social Security disability system. It will provide long-term savings from changes to Social Security. In fact, this will represent the first bipartisan reform we have had since the early 1980s.

I look forward to continuing to discuss this legislation with our colleagues and finding a way to move forward as we face the big challenges still ahead of us in the Senate. The only alternative to this negotiated deal would be a clean debt ceiling increase and a continuing resolution at current spending levels, which would have a devastating impact on our military and our national security.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 8 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein and with the time equally divided in the usual form; further, that all time during quorum calls be charged equally between both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of reauthorizing the Ex-Im Bank. I know some of my colleagues were here earlier, and I wanted to join them, but I was at a hearing over in commerce. I do want to thank Senators CANTWELL and KIRK for their leadership on this issue. I also want to thank my colleagues, Senators HEITKAMP, SHAHEEN, MIKULSKI, and BOXER, who were on the floor today voicing their strong and continued support for the Ex-Im Bank.

Yesterday, the House voted 313 to 118 to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. That is a strong bipartisan vote that included a majority of Republicans. It included seven of the eight Members of the congressional delegation from the State of Minnesota, including several Republicans.

The Ex-Im Bank also has bipartisan support here in the Senate, which has voted twice this year to reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank, both times with more than 60 votes. Now it is time for the Senate to take up this bill and vote to reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank with no further delay. This year, the Senate has been in the lead on this. We have shown the kind of bipartisan support that helped the House to get the numbers they needed, and now we must simply pass the bill.

The Ex-Im Bank has been reauthorized 16 times in its 81-year history, every time with a broad bipartisan majority. As yesterday's House vote and previous votes in the Senate show, the Ex-Im Bank still has the support of a broad bipartisan majority.

Since coming to the Senate, I have been working to boost America's ability to compete in the global economy. I serve on the President's Export Council. I believe America needs to be a country that once again thinks, invents things, and exports to the world. We like our financial industry—we have the sixth biggest bank in the country out of Minnesota—but we all know we can't simply rely on the financial industry to keep the economy going. The economy has to be a bread-and-butter economy, and that means making things, and that means exports.

When 95 percent of the world's customers live outside of our borders, there is literally a world of opportunity out there for U.S. businesses. U.S. exports have helped expand our economy over the past 4 years, reaching an alltime high of $2.3 trillion, an increase of 34 percent since 2009 after inflation.

We know there are about 85 credit export agencies in 60 other countries, including every exporting country in the world. Our businesses are competing against these foreign businesses, which are backed by their own countries' credit export programs and often receive other government subsidies. Why would we want to make it harder for our own companies to compete in a world where all the other exporting nations have an export-type bank financing authority? When our companies are competing against overseas companies for contracts, they need the Ex-Im Bank.

In 2014, the Ex-Im Bank provided support for $27 billion worth of U.S. exports. This sounds like a lot, but in the same year China financed more than double that amount—$58 billion compared to $27 billion—and South Korea and Germany also provided more support for their exports. If we don't get this done, Mr. President, China will eat our lunch.

If we want a level playing field for our businesses, we need to have the U.S. Ex-Im Bank open and running. Do you know what our companies find out right now? Well, the charter has lapsed. When these U.S. companies or our foreign competitors go to the Ex-Im Bank Web site, do you know what they see on the Web site? I will tell you. I went to the Web site and saw it myself. It says this: ''Due to a lapse in EXIM Bank's authority, as of July 1, 2015, the Bank is unable to process applications or engage in new business or other prohibited activities.'' Every one of our foreign competitors knows this is up on our own U.S. Web site.

To me, this is about jobs. As the ranking member of the Joint Economic Committee, I know that in 2014 the Ex-Im Bank provided $20.5 billion in financing. That supported 164,000 jobs. I know there are hundreds of companies in Minnesota—I think the exact number is 170—that use financing authority. The vast majority of them are small companies. These small business owners, like many small business owners all across the country, know it is essential for their ability to export. They can't have a full-time bank person in their small companies. They can't have a full-time expert on trade with various countries—Kazakhstan, you name it—all around the world. They need the help of the Ex-Im Bank to know how to get this financing.

I visit all 87 counties in my State every year, and a lot of that time is spent visiting these small businesses. Even when I don't mean to find an Ex-Im-type business, I find one. I heard from Fastenal and Miller Ingenuity, both from Winona. I have heard from EJ Ajax Metalforming, a leader in workforce policies. So everywhere from Fastenal to PERMAC, an award-winning women-run manufacturer in Burnsville, I have found that Minnesota businesses get help from Ex-Im Bank.

The time is here. We can't put it off any longer. Our colleagues in the House, despite the fact that they didn't even know if they had a Speaker for a number of weeks, were able to pass this bill. Now it is our turn. Let's get this done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS OF FAITH

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, it is just past the middle of football season in America—a sad thing for a lot of us who are football fans. This is the time when some fans are thinking seriously about the playoffs and other fans start thinking seriously about trying to get their coach fired.

In Bremerton, WA, coach Joe Kennedy is in trouble not because the team has a losing record but because he has the audacity to kneel down and pray on the 50-yard line after the football games are over and thank God for the chance to coach there and for the safety of his players.

Gratitude to God is certainly not a crime in America. In fact, that is encouraged every year in the national prayer proclamation given by every President for decades, including this one. Coach Joe Kennedy is the varsity assistant coach and the JV head coach in Bremerton, WA. He enjoys working with the guys and coaching football. He has an excellent employment record at the school and has been a great motivator of the guys on his team.

Since 2008, Coach Kennedy has had the habit of walking out to the 50-yard line after the game is over and kneeling down to pray. After a few weeks of his starting to do this in 2008, a couple of the Christian students on the team also asked if they could come and kneel down next to him, which they have done and he has allowed them to do. They are not required to pray. They are not required to be there at all. But those students have the freedom they have exercised to express their faith, and so does Coach Kennedy.

For some reason, this season has been different. Now the district has asked the coach not to pray after the games. Instead, they want to provide him with a private room where he can go and pray separately so no one will see him. I have a letter from the district where they say they will give him this accommodation: ''[A] private location within the school building, athletic facility or press box could be made available to you for brief religious exercise before and after games.'' They literally want him to go into another spot so no one will see him pray. That seems to be the accommodation here. They are saying to him that he has the freedom to pray in a location we choose.

The district has the fear that if anyone sees the coach praying, they may think the coach endorses or that the district endorses a particular faith. They wrote in a separate letter to the coach these criteria to say: As we go forward, these are the standards to apply. Quoting from the district:

Students are free to initiate and engage in religious activity, including prayer, so long as it does not interfere with the school or team activities. Student religious activity must be entirely and genuinely student-initiated, and may not be suggested, encouraged (or discouraged), or supervised by District staff.

Second, and continuing to quote:

If students engage in religious activity, school staff may not take any action likely to be perceived by a reasonable observer, who is aware of the history and context of such activity at BHS, as endorsement of that activity. Examples identified in the Borden case include kneeling or bowing of the head during the students' religious activities.

You and all District staff are free to engage in religious activity, including prayer, so long as it does not interfere with job responsibilities. Such activity must be physically separate from any student activity, and students may not be allowed to join such activity. In order to avoid the perception of endorsement discussed above, such activity should either be non-demonstrative—

In other words, you can't see it outwardly—(i.e. not outwardly discernible as religious activity) if students are also engaged in religious conduct, or it should occur while students are not engaging in such conduct.

In other words, don't get near a Christian student when they are praying and bowing their head and also bow your head.

It is an odd thing that the district would worry that their actions would be perceived that they may have an official policy for Christianity, but they don't seem to have the same worry that their actions to try to eliminate anyone expressing their faith would be an official policy of atheism at the campus, since if they purged all displays of faith from any person, it would appear that no faith is the endorsed faith of the district.

Under this policy, if a teacher who is a Christian sees another Christian student praying, they have to get away from them or at least walk past them as if they are disinterested. I don't think people understand how offensive that is to our faith. If I see a student praying, I would want to stand by them to hear their prayer, to be encouraged by their prayer.

Under this policy, if a Christian student had been bullied at school and they wanted to sit by a Christian teacher at lunch, when that student at lunch bowed their head to pray over their low-calorie lunch meal, at their school lunch, the Christian teacher would either have to walk away or they would have to ignore their prayer, further ostracizing the student.

Citizens don't lose their freedom of faith just because they also work for a State or Federal agency. People can display their faith—as this coach did for 7 years, and it had not been a problem for this coach to kneel down and pray at the end of the game. I am confused why suddenly now the district is concerned about this display of faith.

Individuals can display their faith personally. It is their personal faith. It is not some endorsement by the district. A Wiccan teacher can wear a pentagram necklace. A Muslim teacher can wear a head scarf. A Christian can bow their head to pray at lunch, even a faculty member. A Sikh teacher can wear a turban. All of those are outward displays of a certain faith. How can a school district say that if you display your faith in a way that someone else can see it and figure out that you have faith, suddenly that is a violation of the establishment clause of the Constitution?

Courts have ruled that in a school setting, prayer cannot be mandatory in the school, compelled by the school, led by the school. While some have a problem with this interpretation, frankly, I don't. I, quite frankly, think teachers have multiple different faiths and multiple backgrounds, and I have the responsibility as a parent to train my child how to pray consistent with our faith. That is not the responsibility of that teacher at school to be able to teach them their faith. That is my job.

I do have a problem when an individual teacher is restrained from practicing their own faith or an individual student is restricted from that. It is entirely different when a district states that a coach may not quietly pray or allow students to voluntarily participate with a coach in prayer when they share the same faith. After a game is over and all the players are free to leave, that is their own free time. They can go to the locker room, they can talk to their parents, and they can flirt with the cheerleaders on the sidelines. That is their own time. They can choose to do what they want to do, but they shouldn't be restricted from praying if they also choose to do that.

The Bremerton School District attorneys have chosen to apply the Borden v. School District of the Township of East Brunswick to this particular case. In that case, the coaches couldn't lead a prayer or participate if all the players were required to be present before the game. This is a required team meeting in the Borden School District of the Township of East Brunswick. This is completely different. This is after the game, when no player is required, no one is expected to be there, and those students and those coaches are on a brief period of respite after the game.

For some reason, in this day and age, some citizens have become terrified of faith in America and prayer in America. They are frightened when people exercise their faith and live according to their sincerely held religious beliefs. So they try to quash it quietly. That is astounding to me—as a nation that was based on this basic principle of people being able to live their faith, not just to have it but to be able to live it.

If a coach went to the 50-yard line after the game, sat down on a lawn chair and drank a Coke, no one would have a problem. If a coach went to the 50-yard line and sang Michael Jackson's ''Thriller'' and did the dance moves, he would be a YouTube sensation, but the district would have no problem with it. But if a coach goes to the 50-yard line, kneels down and prays, somehow that is a different type of speech or action. It is not. It is speech. It is the freedom of faith. It is who we are as Americans and our diversity in America. There is nothing different about that speech.

The establishment clause in the Constitution is clear: ''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . . ''

This is not the freedom to have a religion. This is the freedom to exercise it. It is very clear in the Constitution.

For some in this generation, they want to talk about freedom of worship. You can worship and you can go to a place of worship, you can worship with anybody, any way you want to, if you go over there and do it, but they don't want people to actually come out and live their faith publicly.

We don't have freedom of worship in America. China has freedom of worship. We have the free exercise of religion, where we can live our faith outside of our church buildings, in our private lives, even if you are a public individual.

It is reasonable for this Congress to speak out on this issue because it is a First Amendment freedom. Protecting one coach's right to pray protects every person's right to pray in the Nation.

So let me ask a question. Is the district going to engage in stopping coaches from kneeling down on the sideline during the fourth quarter in a last-second field goal attempt and prevent them from praying on the sidelines? That is a rich tradition in football.

How about this moment. Last Saturday at Oklahoma State University, we had an incredible tragedy where a car careened through the homecoming parade, killing many and injuring many more. It was a horrible tragedy. It happened just hours before the game. Players and coaches at Oklahoma State University walked out of the tunnel, and before the game started—when typically they would all gather and cheer together—they instead chose, players and coaches, to kneel down on the sideline and to pray for the families who were affected by this incredible tragedy just hours before. This apparently offends some people, that people in a State setting would express their private faith. Nothing was mandated about this. This was a group of players and coaches, that their heart was grieved for what was happening in their city and among the Oklahoma State family. This shouldn't be prohibited in America. This is who we are.

I don't challenge the people in Bremerton. These are all honorable people who want what is best for Bremerton, WA, families. They all care about their kids there. The superintendent, the principal, the coaches, they all care about the kids there. This is a genuine misunderstanding of what our Nation protects and what our Nation stands for.

Article 6, clause 3 of the Constitution says this: ''No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.''

In our Constitution, any individual who serves in any public trust in the United States doesn't have to set their faith aside nor have to take on any faith. In America, you can have a faith and live it or you can have no faith at all. That is the United States of America.

Every day in this Chamber, including today, the Chaplain for the U.S. Senate begins our session in prayer. In this Chamber, the words ''In God We Trust'' are written right above the main doors as we walk in, the same as it is in the House Chamber above the Speaker's chair. We are not a nation that is trying to purge all faith. We are a nation that allows people to live their faith.

I ask individuals in this Chamber right now who choose to, to even pray with me as I close out this statement.

Father, I pray for Coach Kennedy and the leadership of Bremerton, the superintendents, and the principals. They have a difficult job, and I pray that You would bless them today. And I pray that You encourage those students, as they struggle with this basic religious freedom that we have in this Nation, that there would be a unity there and a decision that would be made that would clearly stand on the side of freedom. For the coaches and teachers of all faiths who serve there and serve across our Nation, I pray that You would bless those coaches and teachers today. They do a difficult task. As they walk with students through difficult decisions, I pray that You would encourage them in Your faith.

Thank You, Jesus, for the way that You sustain our Nation and for the freedom that we have. We ask Your help in protecting us.

In Your Name I pray. Amen.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—S. 2165 AND S. 697

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 270, S. 2165, a bill to permanently authorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund; that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would like to ask that the consent be modified to pass a short-term extension, S. 2169, with my amendment, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I will note that we secured this language an hour ago. We have no complete insight on the impact of the language, and this is language more appropriately debated in the committee process. I wish to ask my colleague to consider introducing it for action on the floor at some future point and not use it to obstruct funding or authorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. If my colleague is not comfortable with such a suggestion, then I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator declines to modify his request.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. LANKFORD. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, this first request was to get this bill done right now and reauthorized. I am going to turn to a different possibility, which is to secure a debate here on the floor which would afford my colleague from Oklahoma the opportunity to present his thoughts.

I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, but no later than Thursday, November 12, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 270, S. 2165; that there be 1 hour of debate equally divided between the proponents and opponents; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that the vote on passage be subject to a 60-affirmative-vote threshold; and, finally, that there be no amendments, motions or points of order in order to the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LANKFORD. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, we have now seen a demonstration. I want to talk to Senator MERKLEY about this. I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. UDALL. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a piece of legislation that has been in place and in law for 50 years, as Senator MERKLEY knows. It has been in place for 50 years, and it has expired. There is overwhelming support for this. A number of us have signed letters. Senator BURR, who is here, I know has been a leader in terms of working on the Republican side. We have a huge amount of support, but a small little group is objecting to this moving forward.

I say to Senator MERKLEY, this is showing the dysfunction that here we have a bill and the leadership cannot get the bill on to the floor. I wanted to ask the Senator in terms of his State. I know in my State people love their parks. They love the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I think the same is true in Oregon; isn't it? This is something that we shouldn't have let lapse, and we have to put it in place.

Mr. MERKLEY. My colleague from New Mexico is absolutely correct. For these 50 years that he noted, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has protected millions of acres of our land, including playgrounds and parks, our most treasured national landscapes—

all without costing our taxpayers a single dime. It is, without question, our Nation's most important and successful conservation and outdoor recreation program.

Oregon, specifically, has received about $300 million over the past five decades, safeguarding areas that are now complete treasures for our State, such as the Oregon Dunes and the Hells Canyon Recreation Area. These special places are part of our heritage, and protecting them has been made possible through this fund. It is a commitment to preserving these special places for future generations in Oregon and throughout the Nation, and it also serves to really strengthen the outdoor recreation economy in our State.

What is a win for our heritage is also a win for our rural economy. This effort to torpedo something of great value in terms of protection of special places and our rural economy is a step or a stride in absolutely the wrong direction.

Mr. UDALL. I say to Senator MERKLEY, one of the things we face here is that because the Land and Water Conservation Fund has not been reauthorized, there are Senators who are trying to attach this to other pieces of legislation. You and I have worked very well on the Toxic Substances Control Act, which now has over 60 votes. This has really held down both pieces of legislation. The Land and Water Conservation Fund can't be reauthorized, and we can't pass the Toxic Substances Control Act, which has overwhelming support.

We are in a situation where the leadership needs to step in and say: Both of these have huge support in the Senate—bipartisan support. Let's get a vote on them. Let's not continue to have this gridlock and dysfunction.

Does the Senator see it that way in terms of how this is playing out on the floor right now?

Mr. MERKLEY. I absolutely share the Senator's perspective on this. In terms of the Toxic Substances Control Act, TSCA, or the Lautenberg Act, as we now call it, this is an effort to remove—and you have championed this in a bipartisan way. You have brought this forward. It has been approved through an extensive committee process, and we have a shot, finally, to have a process in which we can take and remove toxic items from everyday products.

A good example is that we are standing here on a carpet, and the carpet is full of flame retardants that don't really retard flames but definitely cause cancer. Having those scientifically analyzed and considered as to whether they should be in our carpets or not makes a lot of sense. You think of little babies crawling during their first months of life on these carpets, and their noses are right down there in the dust. The dust is attached to these toxic chemicals. I believe your bill—this bill—not only is bipartisan, but it has more than 60 or at least 60 cosponsors.

Mr. UDALL. Yes.

Mr. MERKLEY. Here we are with this paralyzed process where a few individuals say: You know, I guess it is not important to get toxic cancer-causing items out of our household products. Also, it is not important that our States get flexible funds to preserve special places.

I suggest that rather than blocking such legislation, folks who have that mind come to the floor and make their case. If they want more cancer for our children, come to make your case. If you don't want to preserve special places in America, come and make your case. But do not obstruct this body from being able to have the conversation.

Mr. LANKFORD. Would the Senator consider consent to join the colloquy?

Mr. UDALL. Please, Senator LANKFORD.

Mr. LANKFORD. Thank you for letting me join the conversation.

The argument here is not against whether I would want or other Members would want cancer-causing items or would want to have the degradation. The problem is the degradation in our public parks and lands.

We have an $11.5 billion backlog in our national parks right now. Inexplicably, the Land and Water Conservation Fund does not allow for the maintenance of what we have. The U.S. Government currently manages 29 percent of the land mass in the United States. We have a multibillion dollar backlog, including in our national treasure, which is the national parks that are out there.

This amendment that I have, and which others are proposing, is to simply say: Before we keep adding land—at least at the same rate we are adding more land—we should be maintaining that land. It is equivalent to if you are going to buy car, you need to at least set aside some money to pay for gas.

All that we are asking for is something that has been asked for now for a long time through multiple committees and multiple hearings, and that is, that as we engage in purchasing new property, we also make sure we are setting aside dollars from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to actually maintain what we are purchasing.

The dollars that are there already are a $20 billion amount that is set aside for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The fund continues to function under the current CR. Appropriations have already been planned and put in place by the committees to be able to put it out there. This doesn't affect the current ongoing functioning. It only affects new dollars coming to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It is already functioning as it is. In fact, it has a 65-year account set aside for it.

The challenge now is this: Are we going to maintain what we have or are we going to keep purchasing new lands and not maintain what we have? I would say we can protect us from cancer-causing agents and we can maintain what we have as well.

Mr. UDALL. Thank you, Senator LANKFORD, for that intervention.

I think the important point here—and I know Senator BURR is here on the floor so I am going to make a unanimous consent request with regard to TSCA. But let me just say that I can't agree with the amendment that Senator LANKFORD has talked about. I know it is very controversial—the idea of taking money out of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is going to the States for parks and to the Federal side for parks, and dedicating that to maintenance. That is something we should have done in budgets long ago, and the problem is we haven't had adequate budgets for our parks. So we have a backlog.

Senator MERKLEY mentioned, in terms of TSCA, the health and safety of children. There is one person I want to talk about, a woman by the name of Dominique Browning. She works with an organization called Moms Clean Air Force. She worries about her kids and the toys and the products they use. She herself survived kidney cancer. When she asked her doctor what caused the kidney cancer, he said:

> It's one of those environmental ones. Who knows? We're full of chemicals.

This is about people such as Dominique Browning, who want to see a cop on the beat who is going to do something about chemicals. I think this dysfunction, this inability to deal with two very popular bills, is something on which we need the leadership to step in. The leadership has the control of the floor and is able to move forward.

So I rise today in support of the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act.

Last week, the Senate missed an opportunity to move forward on this bill and to send it to conference with the House. I was disappointed, but, I know that we can still get this done. And for the protection of American families we must get this done.

The Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 is supposed to protect us. It doesn't.

There are over 84,000 known chemicals and hundreds of new ones every year. Only five have been banned by the EPA. Only five out of 84,000.

TSCA is broken. We all know this. It fails to protect families. It fails to provide confidence in consumer products. We have a chance to change that. And that is what our bill will do. That is why 60 Senators from both sides of the aisle support this critical reform.

For decades now, the risks are there, the dangers are there, but, there is no cop on the beat. American families are waiting for real protection.

Unfortunately, last week, because of Senate dysfunction, we asked them to wait a little longer.

They have waited too long already, because this is about our health and safety. This is about our children and

grandchildren. This is about people like Dominique Browning, who works with Moms Clean Air Force, who worries about her kids, and the toys and products they use every day. She herself survived kidney cancer. When she asked her doctor what caused her kidney cancer, he said: ''It's one of those environmental ones. Who knows? We're full of chemicals.''

This is about people like Lisa Huguenin. Lisa is a Ph.D. scientist who has done work on chemical exposure at Princeton and Rutgers and at the State and Federal level. But she is a mother first. Her 13-year-old son, Harrison, was born with autism and auto-immune deficiencies. Five years ago, Lisa testified before Senator Lautenberg's subcommittee on the need for reform. She is eager to see TSCA reform pass the Senate and be signed into law.

The time for TSCA reform is now, and it may not come again for many years. It has passed the House. It is ready to move through the Senate.

I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 121, S. 697, a bill to reauthorize and modernize the Toxic Substances Control Act; that the only amendment in order be a substitute amendment to be offered by Senator INHOFE; that there be up to 2 hours of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on adoption of the Inhofe amendment; that upon disposition of the substitute amendment, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I ask the author of this unanimous consent request to modify the unanimous consent request to allow an amendment to be considered in the TSCA debate, where we would take up the Cantwell-Murkowski bipartisan language on the reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. LANKFORD. I object to the modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma objects.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. BURR. I object to the underlying unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, we have hit a roadblock, not because of the substance, but because of a disagreement over a completely unrelated bill, the re-authorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. A bill that I, along with a majority of Senators, strongly support.

I respect my colleague, Senator BURR. He is a true leader on LWCF. It never should have expired.

The reauthorization has strong, bipartisan support. Fifty-three Senators signed a letter led by Senator BURR recently, and I am confident there are over 60 supporters.

I believe that we will reauthorize and continue to fund LWCF. As the ranking Democrat on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, that is an extremely high priority for me and it is extremely important to the people of my State.

I want to work with Senator BURR. But, LWCF is being blocked by a small minority from Senator BURR's own party.

We have to fight that, and we will. But, TSCA reform should not be held up by demands for a vote on unrelated LWCF legislation.

Groups like the National Wildlife Federation and others who support LWCF reauthorization have called to decouple the two. Other members of the LWCF coalition have told me this as well.

The safety of American families should not be held hostage to the LWCF because the result is all too obvious. The safety of our children and grandchildren is put at risk each and every day that we delay TSCA reform. Is it any wonder the American people look at the Senate with dismay and confusion? At times like this I share their frustration.

Again, I respect Senator BURR. He is a cosponsor of our bill. And I know he does not want a dysfunctional Senate. He fought hard to get the Senate to work out its differences on his cyber security legislation. The Senate passed that bill this week.

The Lautenberg Act deserves the same push. We need cooperation, not ultimatums. I will keep doing what I can to continue the conversation and move forward.

We cannot sacrifice the health of infants and pregnant women, of the elderly and our most vulnerable, to Washington gridlock and obstruction.

It has been a long road. This is a balanced bill and a bipartisan bill. One that Republicans, Democrats, industry, and public health groups can all support. This is historic and urgently needed reform.

So, we won't give up. We will keep going. We aren't just Senators. Many of us are also parents and grandparents. We know how important this is.

This is about the health and safety of our families too, and I believe we can do this.

Our former colleague, Senator Lautenberg, who began this effort years ago, believed we could as well. TSCA reform was his last legislative effort, and he believed it would save more lives than anything he had done. We are proud to have the support of his widow, Bonnie. I want to repeat what Bonnie said so eloquently at the EPW hearing earlier this year.

She said: This cause is urgent, because we are living in a toxic world. Chemicals are rampant in the fabrics we and our children sleep in and wear, the rugs and products in our homes and in the larger environment we live in. How many family members and friends have we lost to cancer? We deserve a system that requires screening of all chemicals to see if they cause cancer or other health problems. How many more people must we lose before we realize that having protections in just a few states isn't good enough? We need a federal program that protects every person in this country.

Bonnie Lautenberg is right. How long must American families wait?

They have waited long enough. They should not keep waiting because of a dysfunctional Senate.

Moms like Dominique and Lisa are watching and waiting and asking. What are we doing to protect their children, and the children of New Mexico, New Jersey, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and every other State.

Reform is 40 years overdue. So, one way or another, we will pass this bill in the Senate. We will resolve our differences with the House, and this critical reform will go to the President's desk.

Senator MERKLEY, we are here at this point where we saw—and we have now been joined by Senator MARKEY also, and if Senator MARKEY wishes to participate in this colloquy, I would ask consent to do that.

We are at a point where we have two very popular pieces of legislation that have enough votes to get them on the floor and to deal with a filibuster, and we don't have the ability to do that. So that is where we are. It is time for this place to abandon dysfunction and abandon the kind of gridlock we see and get these bills on the floor.

As Senator MERKLEY said, if people have an objection or an amendment like the Senator from Oklahoma, they can come down and offer it. I don't know what my friend's thoughts are, but Senator MARKEY is here and I am sure is willing to speak on this issue also.

Mr. MERKLEY. I think what is extraordinary about this situation is that both of these bills have at least 60 cosponsors, which as Senator UDALL pointed out is enough to close debate and get to a final vote. There was a time not very long ago when even controversial bills were voted on by a single majority. Unfortunately, we are now at the point where virtually every bill has to get cloture because some individual objects to having a debate, even if they are not willing to stand on the floor and debate it, and that is another topic. The Senator from New Mexico and I have suggested that we need to change that, so if someone objects to certain legislation, that Member should be on the floor speaking

about their objection so it is transparent to the American public.

Nonetheless, in this situation, we already have 60 supporters for both of these bills. We have 60 supporters and cosponsors for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and 60 supporters for TSCA—the Lautenberg act, which is now my colleague's act—and they are both very important to our country. So for us to fail to get these bills on the floor and act is a dramatic example of the failure of this institution to be able to operate as a legislature.

This can be cured. The majority leader could arrange to bring these bills to the floor. With his support and the support of the cosponsors, we could get cloture to bring those bills to the floor, and that would not only be a tribute to how the U.S. Senate functions, it would also do important work for the people of America by reauthorizing the funds to protect our special places and creating a system that will operate effectively to get toxic chemicals out of our everyday products.

I think it comes as a shock to people across America that we have not regulated a single chemical that goes into toxic products since 1991, and it is absolutely unacceptable. They believe and expect that the items they handle every day have gone through the process of being safe and that we are not poisoning ourselves, and it is very shocking to discover that is not the case.

These are two very important bills to our country. Both of these bills have 60 supporters. Let's get them to the floor and show that the Senate can actually be a deliberative body and that we can do good work for the future of America.

Mr. UDALL. I thank my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank the Senators from New Mexico and Oregon for their leadership on this issue.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity. . . .

There is a certain Dickensian quality to the Senate floor today. We rarely have debate on environmental bills that enjoy not only token bipartisan support but overwhelming bipartisan support. Today is the best of times, the age of wisdom, and the epoch of belief because we can debate not just one environmental bill that has overwhelming bipartisan support but two bills that have overwhelming bipartisan support. Yet today is also the worst of times, the age of foolishness and the epoch of incredulity because a handful of Senate Republicans have just prevented both of these bills from even getting a vote.

First, we had a request to reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a program conceived of by John F. Kennedy, who presented Congress with draft legislation for it in 1963. I am proud to be counted among the more than 60 Senate supporters of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Next, we had a request to consider reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act that helps to protect the American people against these dangerous toxic chemicals. I am proud to be a supporter of the language the Senate is expected to vote on, and some have predicted upward of 85 Senate votes in favor of that environmental bill.

First, a handful of Senate Republicans will not allow a vote on the Land and Water Conservation Fund because they don't like the program, and then other Senate Republicans who do like the Land and Water Conservation Fund will not allow a vote on TSCA because we couldn't act on the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

This is nothing short of absurd. It is hard enough to reach a consensus in the U.S. Senate on any issues, much less environmental issues, but some of our colleagues seem determined to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

Shouldn't we be able to make this the best of times on both of these bills while we have the chance to do so instead of perpetuating the worst of times view that Americans increasingly have of the ability of Congress to get its job done?

I hope all of my colleagues can come together so we can agree that here, where there are far more than 60 votes on the Senate floor for two historic environmental bills—that we do not allow for a small handful of Members to be able to stop both bills from being able to even be considered on the Senate floor.

Yesterday's agreement on the debt ceiling and on having the budget go forward is how Congress should be operating. We should take the big issues, try to work together, and understand that there are going to be differences of opinion, but when there is overwhelming support for legislation, we should be able to move forward.

I thank the Senator from New Mexico. I thank all who have worked on this issue on a bipartisan basis. This bill has vastly improved the TSCA bill from where it was months ago, and I highly recommend it to my colleagues on the Senate floor. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is something that goes back so many decades, and it is central to a continuation of the commitment that each and every State in our country is able to make on two environmental programs.

I hope we can find a way of resolving this issue because it is time for us to take action on the Senate floor on these two critical environmental issues.

I yield back to the Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. I thank the Senator from Massachusetts.

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. BURR. 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. BURR. I thank the Presiding Officer.

Let me stand and take all the blame. I am the guy holding up the chemical bill, TSCA.

This is the greatest deliberative body in the world. This is an institution that has never shied away from any debate or any vote, and we proved it last night as we passed a very technical, difficult cyber security vote. We can take on tough issues and we can weed through them, but what we are doing today is a charade. We said that at 12 we would come down here and that there would be competitive unanimous consent requests. It is a joke. It is an absolute joke. We forced the Presiding Officer to be here to object, knowing he strongly objects to the legislation.

There is one guy who has been trying to facilitate this, and that is Senator INHOFE. Throughout the whole process he has tried to work it out, but the fact is maybe we are at a stalemate. To suggest that I shouldn't have the opportunity to amend any piece of legislation is to take every right I have as a U.S. Senator. To come to the floor and chastise any Member because they would like to amend legislation—that is why we were sent here by our constituents from our States.

If we look back at over 200 years of history, we know this body doesn't allow the biggest State to win. It allows every State to have their voice heard and every Member has the right to provide input on behalf of their constituents.

Let me say to the authors on both sides that I am going to hold up the chemical bill until there is an opportunity for me to either amend it or to offer the Land and Water Conservation Fund and permanently extend it on another piece of legislation. It is plain and simple.

We can come and do these unanimous consent requests, we can feel good and go home and look and say: Here is what I did. I am on both sides of an issue. If that works, then do it.

I will be brave enough to tell everyone I am the guy holding it up. I am holding it up because I am an equal Member of the U.S. Senate. I am not scared to debate TSCA, and I am not scared to debate the Land and Water Conservation Fund because that is what this institution was created to do.

I sort of get the impression that we set this up to determine who is more committed to something. That is what the vote is for. It is not about the talk or the debate, it is the vote. If we can't get to the vote, it is difficult to determine who is for something and who is against it.

Let me say to my colleagues that the Land and Water Conservation Fund was set up over 50 years and receives

its funding off the royalties of the exploration on offshore oil and gas; 87.5 percent of it goes to the general revenue fund of the Federal Government and 12.5 percent goes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was never set up to handle maintenance at any State or Federal facilities. It was set up to allow individual treasures to be preserved by leveraging Federal dollars against private and State dollars to take in parcels, such as the Appalachian Trail, to take buffer pieces against things like the Blue Ridge Parkway, to protect a certain treasure in a State where the Land and Water Conservation Fund went in and matched with private dollars and then turned around and turned it over to the State for a State park. The benefit is if it is private land, there is no access, but when it is public land held by the State, fishermen and hunters can access it for recreational use and can now use that State park.

I am exactly where the Presiding Officer is. I don't want to increase the Federal footprint of what we own, whether it is land or buildings. I want to get out of the business of ownership. I only want to preserve those things that up to this point we have determined are valuable to future generations, and that is not by increasing the size of those Federal holdings, it is just about protecting those Federal holdings. And when we talk about protecting and providing for maintenance, let me suggest that it is a conversation we need to have with appropriators because they are getting 87.5 percent of the royalty split.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund, when we originally conceived it—I admit I was not here 50 years ago; I think JOHN MCCAIN was the only person who might have been around—it was envisioned when that fund was created that when we take something from the land, we put something back. So when we take resources, we are going to protect something over here. It was also the direction of the legislation that $900 million a year go into this Land and Water Conservation Fund. We have averaged over those 50 years somewhere in the neighborhood of about $385 million a year.

The Presiding Officer stopped me one day and he said: What about the $20 billion in the fund? There isn't any $20 billion in the fund. Appropriators spent that every year. They get the royalty split 100 percent, 20 percent goes over into this fund, they appropriate X, and what is left over they spend, along with the other 87.5 percent.

Do we want to do maintenance in national parks? Appropriate it. The money is there, and it is not taxpayer money. We are collecting it off of royalties on expirations. And it is very important that we do that maintenance. It is also important that the National Park Service prioritize maintenance over every other thing that is funded when maintenance is eliminated. But I think we have to understand it is not an either/or. We can be good stewards and invest in how we leverage Federal dollars with private dollars and also invest in the maintenance of existing facilities. If that wasn't the case, States would be up here crying for more money, more money, more money to maintain their parks. But they understand that is their responsibility and they budget for it.

As I sat here a little while ago, I thought this was more reminiscent of an episode of ''Star Trek.'' I was waiting for somebody to say, ''Beam me up, Scotty.'' This is crazy. I will agree with my good friend from New Mexico—maybe it does take leadership making a decision that we are going to do both of these, but the leader doesn't control things when we get the debt ceiling from the House. He doesn't control what legislation we have to do. Let's face it—we don't have to do either one of these. If we did, the Land and Water Conservation Fund after 50 years would not have expired.

I might say I came to the floor and I begged at the time that I would be satisfied if we just extended for 60 days the Land and Water Conservation Fund in TSCA. We could have debated it and voted on it with just one amendment. But some said: No, not a 60-day extension; we want it to expire. Well, it has expired, and the price to bring it back is permanent reauthorization. It is no longer 60 days or 90 days, it is permanent reauthorization. Why? Because this may be the best Federal program we have ever run. It is not funded with taxpayer money. It takes those royalty moneys and it leverages against State and private dollars to maximize the preservation for the next generation. Name another program that does that. Name another program that doesn't stick their hand in the taxpayers' pocket, that leverages it with private dollars to maximize the impact of it. This program does it day in and day out in all of the States in the United States.

I could argue today that I would love to see as part of the amendment that North Carolina gets a bigger share of that. But, as the Presiding Officer knows, with me, that is sort of left up to appropriators because they are the ones who decide where the money goes. I am not here to prosecute them, but I am here to say to my colleagues: Let's quit being foolish. Let's have an honest debate on two different bills or put them together. I have heard that we can't amend TSCA and put permanent reauthorization in because then it stands a chance of not passing in the House. Bull. I just say bull to that. Give the House a chance. There are just as many people over there who support the permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. They are not all captured in the U.S. Senate. Why? Because a majority of America is for permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Why wouldn't they be? It is their future. It is about their children and their grandchildren.

I will end with this. To all of my colleagues, this is not about us. No piece of legislation that we bring on this floor, we debate, and we vote on is about us. If it is, we are nothing better than a crisis management institution. This is about generations to come. This is about our children and our grandchildren. And when we look through that window at the issue, we understand the stewardship we assume. We assume stewardship in the way we spend taxpayers' money, we assume stewardship in the direction of this country, we assume stewardship in the impact we have globally around the world, and we assume stewardship when we talk about taking care of this footprint God gave us.

I remember the debate as we got ready to build a visitors' center outside. I remember the history lessons that the more senior Members gave me at the time when I said: It will cost a lot of money. We can build it on top of the ground for about half the cost as we can build it underneath the ground.

I was given the history of this building being the byproduct of a bill through Congress called the Residence Act in 1790. Congress appropriated 500,000 taxpayer dollars to build it. When the British came, the building wasn't finished, but they were nice enough to burn what we had built. Most of the exterior was saved. The interior needed to be totally redone. Congress ended up appropriating another chunk of change, and the original Capitol design was not completed until 1823. And by 1823, the footprint needed to increase because the size of the Senate and the House had grown; therefore, we needed more space.

I remind my colleagues that at the original time, we had housed in this building the House, the Senate, the Library of Congress, and the Supreme Court. And we started this wing—what we are in—in the Senate and the wing in the House. Outside they look identical; inside they are very different. But when they did that, they doubled the length of the Capitol, and they actually had to then take off the Bulfinch dome of wood and copper sitting on a sandstone base, and they built the dome we know today—cast iron, 9 million pounds, still suspended on that original sandstone and limestone base.

Since 1863, when the Statue of Freedom was lowered on top of this Capitol, it has looked exactly the same. I have said for 21 years that my responsibility is to make sure that 100 years from now and 200 years from now, it looks exactly like this on the outside. That was the compelling reason for spending twice as much money to put the Capitol Visitor Center underground where it didn't obstruct what is a historical footprint of America's history.

This building—walk around it. It is a museum of American history—to think that an Italian artist could depict

scenes in American history probably better than Americans, but he understood why this country was created, and that influenced his artwork throughout the Capitol.

Let me just suggest to my colleagues that maybe it is time for us to go back on a tour of the Capitol, to realize that our Founders came here not to accomplish anything for themselves but to make sure their children and their grandchildren had something better. And when we start looking at our jobs the same way they looked at creating this country and the same way they looked at preserving this building, then I will assure my colleagues we will settle issues like this in the way that the Senate functions and functions well, and that is in debate and in votes.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. UDALL. 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. UDALL. Mr. President, what just happened here, just so we can allow the American people to understand, was the really honest, sincere effort on two bills that have overwhelming support—the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Frank Lautenberg 21st Century Chemical Safety Act—we wanted to get these on the floor so that we can have debate and have amendments. It is exactly what just happened in the last week and part of this week on the cyber security bill. We got a bill on the floor, there were amendments, we invoked cloture, and then we passed the bill at the end of the day. That is what we are trying to do.

Individual Senators don't have control of the floor. They do have the ability to come to the floor and ask to put bills on the floor, and that is what happened here. Senator MERKLEY showed up and asked to put the Land and Water Conservation Fund bill on the floor, with specific outlines, and it was objected to. I asked to put the Frank Lautenberg 21st Century Chemical Safety Act on the floor, and it was objected to. That is the only power we have. The leadership has the ability to control the floor, and that is why we are on the floor speaking about this.

So this was in no way a charade; this was an honest, sincere effort to try to do everything we can to make sure that everything is transparent here in terms of who is objecting, who doesn't want things to move forward, and who is for moving forward on two very popular bills.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in a period of morning business.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I know there is a 10-minute limit; however, I do not see anyone else seeking the floor, so I ask unanimous consent to continue for 15 minutes.

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

SENATE CAREER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this is really a personal speech. I was very grateful for the indulgences of my fellow Senators who allowed me yesterday to make a few observations after I cast my 15,000th vote. I would like to elaborate a bit more.

I have never lost sight of what a great opportunity and responsibility the Senate affords this Senator from Vermont, day after day, to make things better for Vermonters and for all Americans, to strengthen our country and ensure its vitality on into the future, to forge solutions in the unending quest begun by the founders of this country to form a more perfect union.

Over the last 40 years, I have been blessed to be able to serve with some of the giants of the Senate: Mike Mansfield, Howard Baker, Robert Byrd, Walter Mondale, Hubert Humphrey, Bob Dole, George Mitchell, and my mentor when I came here, then-senior Senator from Vermont, Senator Bob Stafford. I would note that I became the only Democrat ever elected from my State. Senator Stafford was really ''Mr. Republican'' in Vermont. And I wondered what the relationship would be. He immediately took me under his arm and guided me and worked with me, and there wasn't a day that went by that we didn't consult and I didn't gain from his wisdom and experience.

There are so many others. Marcelle and I have made close friendships on both sides of the aisle, like Senator John Glenn and his wife Annie, who were Democrats, and Senator COCHRAN and Senator Lugar, Republicans. I had the privilege and have had the privilege to serve with more than 370 Senators in all from different walks of life and every corner of this Nation, these different backgrounds, different stories, and different life experiences, both parties. And this has made this institution the greatest deliberative body in the world.

I cast my first vote in this Chamber in 1975. It was a resolution to establish the Church Committee. The critical issues of the post-Watergate era parallel issues we face today.

I also had a front-row seat, a bit part in an historic effort, initiated by a Democrat—Senator Mondale of Minnesota—and a Republican—Senator Pearson of Kansas—to change the Senate's earlier cloture rule, which had been abused for decades in thwarting the will of clear majorities of the American people on such crucial issues as civil rights reforms.

That project might not sound difficult, but changing the way the Senate operates is something akin to trying to change the weather.

Late—actually very late one night—in a lengthy, difficult debate—and we sometimes went around the clock—Senator Mondale and Majority Leader Mansfield enlisted me, the most junior Senator, to play a role. They asked me to stay on the floor one night around 2 in the morning to take the gavel as the Presiding Officer. They expected that a lot of tight rulings were coming up. I felt so honored, but I did feel the honor drain away as Senator Mansfield explained, no, no, they just needed somebody big, 6-foot-3, 200 pounds, and who was still awake, to be the Chair for those rulings, in case tempers flared. Sometimes a Senator is no more than a conscious body in the right place at the right time.

But among those 15,000 votes I have been proud to cast on behalf of Vermonters, some were Vermont-oriented, some national, some global: the organic farm bill, the charter for what has become a thriving $30 billion industry—I fought for years for that and got it through with bipartisan support; stronger regulations on mercury pollution and combating the effects of global warming; emergency relief for the devastation caused by Tropical Storm Irene. In that case, Senator GRASSLEY, who spoke on the floor yesterday—I recall the morning after that storm, flying around the devastated State of Vermont. The first call I got was from Senator GRASSLEY saying, ''You Vermonters stood with us. We will stand with you.'' How much that meant, based on relationships that were built over the years.

We adopted price support programs for small dairy farmers. We fought for the privacy and civil liberties of all Americans. I remember supporting the Reagan-O'Neill deal to save Social Security—President Ronald Reagan and Democratic Speaker Tip O'Neill. We fought for nutrition bills to help Americans below the poverty line, joined by people like Bob Dole and George McGovern. Bipartisan—strongly bipartisan—campaign reform in McCain-Feingold. The bipartisan Leahy-Smith Act on patent reform was the first reform in 50 years. I worked with MIKE CRAPO from Idaho to reauthorize and greatly expand and strengthen the Violence Against Women Act.

I was proud to oppose the war in Iraq, a venture that cost so many lives and trillions of taxpayer dollars. Serving on the Armed Services Committee in April of 1975, I became the first and only Vermonter to cast a vote to end the war in Vietnam, and by a one-vote margin, we cut off authorization for the war.

Every significant legislative success I have had has been achieved through

the often slow process of methodically building bipartisan coalitions. A breakthrough in the Senate Judiciary Committee last week in beginning to come to grips with criminal justice reform is a fresh example of this and so was enactment this summer of the electronic surveillance reforms in our USA FREEDOM Act.

I would remind everybody, we are not alone in this body. Legislative work in a democracy in large part is the art of compromise. Compromise is essential in assimilating and digesting competing points of view and competing interests, which are all the more diverse in a large and heterogeneous nation like ours. We are not just some small nation made up of just one particular class of people. The remarkable strength of the United States is that we have people who came here from all over the world and made us a strong nation. And I think we Senators keep faith with our core values as we listen to the perspectives of others. Insisting on our way or no way at all is a surefire recipe for stalemate, to the great detriment of the entire Nation and the people we represent. As Winston Churchill once said: ''The maxim, 'nothing avails but perfection,' may be spelled shorter: PARALYSIS.''

Some measure of self-restraint is essential for a legislative body in a democratic republic like ours to function. Louis Brandeis once said, ''Democracy substitutes self-restraint for external restraint. It is more difficult to maintain than to achieve.'' He was right. Self-restraint in a democracy is not an easy virtue.

In the previous Congress, as President pro tempore, I had the pleasure of accompanying Chaplain Barry Black to the podium as he offered the morning invocation. I like to think—maybe it is more that I like to hope—that some of his inspiration rubs off on us, at least a little, each day. One morning years ago, for instance, he said: ''Give them (the Senators) the stature to see above the wall of prideful opinion.'' We can each point to each other, the other 99, and say: See, that is for you. We have to remember it is for us, too, each one of us.

I was talking, my wife Marcelle and I, last night about 15,000 votes. It didn't seem possible when I came here as a junior Member of the Senate. I also know there is a lot more work to do. I hope we can restore the bipartisan campaign finance reform that so many in this body—Republicans and Democrats—supported. I hope we can restore the historic and foundational Voting Rights Act. I hope we continue to fight to support our farmers, who give us food security and are the very fabric of this country. We are a nation that can feed ourselves. I think we should fight against government overreach in the wake of national security threats. Sometimes going into all our private matters is itself a national security threat. We should do more to support our veterans and their families. When they come back from war, we should continue that support. We should expand education opportunity for all. My family came to Vermont in the 1850s. I became the first Leahy to get a college degree and my sister, the second one. We hope our children and grandchildren will have the same educational opportunities. We should rebuild the American middle class and offer helping hands to lift all Americans out of poverty. We should fund our roads and bridges. We build roads and bridges in other countries in wars where they sometimes get blown up. Let's build some in our own country where we need them. We should pass appropriations bills, not continuing resolutions. Pass them every year, each year. It is a lot of work, but not an insurmountable goal. It will take good will and bipartisan cooperation to achieve them.

We 100 Senators should never forget that we are but the public face of an institution that is supported by thousands of hard-working staff, our office aides and policy experts—my own, of course, among the best in the Senate—the Capitol Police, the folks who keep order and help to showcase this great building to millions of tourists, and those bright and dutiful Senate pages in the well of this Chamber, all of them are part of the Senate family.

The Senate at its best can be the conscience of the Nation. And I have seen that happen over the years when we've risen up together and expressed the conscience of the Nation. And I marvel in the fundamental soundness and wisdom of our system every time it does. We can't afford to put any part of the mechanism on automatic pilot. It takes constant work and vigilance to keep our society working.

It is easy for politicians to appeal to our worst instincts and to our selfishness. Political leaders serve best when they appeal to the best in us, to lift our sights, summon our will, and raise us to a higher level. I still get a thrill every time I walk in this building and walk out on this floor, knowing the history of this place, just knowing I am going to be a part of that history. Senators have come and gone, but I have had one partner through these 15,000 votes: my wife, Marcelle. We came here in 1975 with three wonderful children: Kevin, Alicia, and Mark. Alicia was here in the Chamber yesterday representing her husband, Lawrence, and their children. And I remember my parents and Marcelle's parents visiting often. I remember how much they enjoyed visiting here, seeing what we are doing. But I think they especially wanted to visit their three grandchildren. Well, now I look at our grandchildren—Roan, Francesca, Sophia, Patrick, and Fiona—and I understand how my parents felt.

I am so grateful to my fellow Vermonters for the confidence they have shown in me. It is a measure of trust that urges me on and which I will never betray or take for granted.

As I have reflected on these 15,000 votes, it reminds me of the significance every time we vote, why I feel energized about what votes lie ahead, and how we can keep making a difference.

I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer for his forbearance.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

COMMENDING SENATOR LEAHY

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to reflect on the comments the senior Senator from Vermont has shared. I want to say to Senator LEAHY that what he has reflected in the course of his career of casting 15,000 votes, spanned over four decades in the Senate—some would say the courtliness, the gentlemanliness, the bipartisanship, the deference, the respect, the honor—some would say these are old-fashioned ideas.

This Senator happens to feel they are American values, and how often have we seen those characteristics not on display? Tonight the House of Representatives is going to pass not only raising the debt ceiling so we can pay our bills but also a budget template—a blueprint—under which we can then appropriate the specifics.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for one moment?

Mr. NELSON. Absolutely.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senator from Florida and I have been friends for decades. To get this praise from a man who served with distinction as a Congressman, a Senator, and an astronaut means a great deal to me. I thank him.

Mr. NELSON. The Senator is very gracious, but I stood to comment upon the characteristics he has exemplified in his public life that is a role model for all of us. I was about to say, here we are seeing tonight that the U.S. Congress is going to be able to move ahead without falling off the fiscal cliff because there is going to be a bipartisan vote in the House of Representatives. My goodness gracious, isn't this what it is supposed to be all about?

The Senator from Vermont can remember well over 30 years ago when this Senator was a young Congressman, and the role models in the House of Representatives at the time were Tip O'Neill and Bob Michel—the Democratic speaker and the leader of the Republicans. They had their fights, and at the end of the day they were personal friends. They had a personal relationship. They then could work out all the thorny problems and build consensus in order to govern.

I thank the Senator from Vermont.

TRANSPORTATION BILL

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I came to talk about the Transportation bill. We have it in front of us. Transportation has laid the foundation of our country's success, whether it was

Henry Ford, who showed us how to do mass automotive manufacturing, revolutionized the manufacturing of cars, whether it was Henry Flagler, who built a railroad on an unsettled land along the East Coast of Florida, brought in the development of my State, whether it was the Wright brothers—these guys were much more than bicycle shop owners. These guys were geniuses who studied the movement of birds. They were the first ones to be able to figure out how—what they called it in the day—a heavier-than-air flying machine could do that. These ideas, and over the years the investments, helped make this country become a global leader in almost everything.

With regard to transportation, we have gotten off course. Rather than making big investments, we keep kicking the can down the road. Today's extension—short-term extension, I might say—of the highway trust fund is one more example of this because it is just putting off what we have to do, which is improve our roads, our rails, and our port infrastructure. That means we have to increase the investments in our infrastructure and focus on the area that will not only create jobs and support our economy but will rehabilitate this infrastructure. Our roads are crumbling. Our bridges are crumbling. Remember a few years ago when the bridge collapsed on the main interstate highway in Minnesota—killing a number of people, injuring others. Our infrastructure is crumbling. We need to do these investments in our transportation infrastructure to make sure it is safe.

In July the Senate stood tall. We had a Republican chairman and a Democratic ranking member, Senator INHOFE and Senator BOXER, and they came together just like that—like it is supposed to be around here—and they passed the highway bill. We call it the highway bill, but it includes a lot more: ports, rail, highway safety, all the things that go on with building a new road, such as sidewalks. We passed that. It passed overwhelmingly. It passed overwhelmingly bipartisan—but then you get to the point of how in the world are we going to pay for it.

That bill included many important provisions that will keep workers on the job. For the first time, the bill included a freight rail program that aims to improve freight across all types of transportation—not just freight but trucks, ports. Of course, what this is going to do is it is going to help us move goods more efficiently, whether they are traveling through a port or on rail or on the highways.

For the first time, this highway reauthorization was a bipartisan reauthorization of Amtrak. Amtrak was last reauthorized 2 years ago—way back in 2013. With a strong commitment from the commerce committee chairman, Senator THUNE, all of us on the committee were able to include provisions that will improve our passenger rail systems. In the commerce committee, we fought to improve safety and increase investments in our infrastructure. There were many provisions—especially on trucking and vehicle safety issues—that needed to be improved. What we put in the bill was to prevent rolling back safety improvements in transportation.

Here we are. Today we need to pass this bill so we can quickly get to work on the final bill. This is a stopgap temporary message. I urge the House to work toward a bipartisan compromise like the Senate bill rather than weigh the bill down with a whole bunch of ideological things, safety rollbacks and giveaways to industries. This highway bill is too important to get mired in partisan politics. For us to maintain the safety, efficiency, and growth of our transportation system, Congress must put an end to the instability caused by what we are going to have to do today, which is a short-term extension. We can only do this by working together to find commonsense and bipartisan solutions.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, it has been a while since I have come to the Senate floor to talk about the shortcomings of the so-called Affordable Care Act—a few months at least. The last time I spoke about ObamaCare on the floor, I spoke at some length about the ever-increasing insurance premiums that had resulted from the law's draconian mandates and regulations.

Sadly, as I rise to revisit this subject, things haven't gotten better for ObamaCare. In fact, if the Obama administration's own estimates are to be believed, things are actually getting much worse. As we all know, this Sunday, November 1, marks the beginning of the 2016 open enrollment period for the ObamaCare health insurance exchanges. This is an important milestone for the health care law in large part because President Obama and his supporters have, since the day the law was passed, repeatedly promised that as Americans become more familiar with how the law works, the more they will grow to love it.

ObamaCare proponents wrote off problems in the first year of enrollment as glitches that were to be expected as the country transitioned to a new health care system. Problems in the second year were similarly dismissed as necessary growing pains as everyone learned from the mistakes that were made the previous year. Now, as we approach the third year of enrollment, supporters of the President's health care law are running out of excuses. At this point, most reasonable Americans—including many who may have initially been huge supporters of this endeavor—expect the system created under the law to work the way it was designed to work.

You know what? The law is working the way it was designed to work. The problem is, it is not working the way the designer said it would work. At the time the law was drafted, the architects of ObamaCare said they can impose all new mandates and regulations on the insurance market, requiring massively expanded coverage above and beyond consumer demand, claiming that any increased costs that resulted from these requirements would be offset when more young and relatively healthy consumers were forced to buy insurance or pay a fine. Of course, they only called it a fine when they were drafting the law and initially selling it to the American people. Now a few years and a Supreme Court decision later, we were all supposed to call that fine a tax, but I digress.

My point is that those who drafted the President's health law and then subsequently forced it through Congress on a strictly partisan basis said their new system would expand health coverage for everyone without increasing costs. In fact, they went further. They claimed that it would actually bring costs down. However, due to the way the law was actually designed, it was never going to work that way.

No matter how many ad campaigns the government charged to the taxpayers and no matter how many talk shows the President went on to encourage hip, young audiences to enroll in the exchanges, the numbers were never going to add up. This is true for one simple reason: For all the attention the drafters of ObamaCare paid to expanding coverage and remaking the health insurance industry, they did not do anything to reduce the actual costs of health care in America.

The problems with ObamaCare are not due to bad marketing, they are the result of fundamental design flaws. Health care costs are the biggest barrier keeping participants out of the insurance market. Health care costs are among the main factors contributing to wage stagnation for American workers. And health care costs continue to be the single largest problem plaguing our Nation's health care system. Yet despite the obvious problems, health care costs were all but ignored when the so-called Affordable Care Act was being drafted, and the few provisions in the law that were aimed at bringing down costs were either poorly conceived, terribly implemented or both.

For example, we had the Consumer Operated and Oriented Plan Program, or CO-OP Program, which was created

to encourage the development of a nonprofit health insurance sector. Specifically, under the CO-OP Program, HHS dealt out $2.4 billion in loans to 23 nonprofit startup plans. Many of which were headed not by insurance or health care experts but by political activists with no actual business experience.

Almost immediately we began to hear reports of mismanagement in the program and poor decisionmaking at the CO-OPs themselves. Earlier this year, the HHS Office of Inspector General reported that 21 of the 23 CO-OPs that received loans under the program—loans that were supposed to last for 15 years, by the way—had suffered staggering losses. This, of course, was not surprising given the inexperience of many of the founders of the CO-OPs and the lack of oversight and accountability at HHS with regard to the program.

While a nonprofit insurer may not be focused on avoiding losses, one would assume that, at the very least, staying in business would be a priority. Yet, over the last several months, 10 of the 23 CO-OPs have had to close their doors, with more failures expected in the near future. The latest CO-OP failure was announced just yesterday and took place in my own home State of Utah, hitting pretty close to home for a number of people in my State who are just trying to find affordable health insurance.

Every time one of these CO-OPs fails, they leave patients and customers in the lurch. A failed CO-OP in New York that was called Health Republic and was considered by many to be a flagship for the loan program will leave more than 150,000 customers looking for new insurance when its doors close at the end of the year. And, of course, $2.4 billion is hardly chump change. Yet that is how much the American taxpayers have shelled out to these CO-OPs, and as of right now, it is unlikely that any of that money is ever coming back.

Despite these obvious problems with ObamaCare, we hear a constant drumbeat from my friends on the other side of the aisle that the law is a smashing success. My friends and colleagues have gotten very good at cherry picking favorable data points to make these types of claims. They will cite an enrollment number out of context or a premium projection that is slightly smaller than one that came before it as evidence that ObamaCare is working and that the only problems with the health care system they so graciously gifted to the American people are the terrible Republicans who have dared to raise objections.

I expect that as time wears on and the number of isolated-yet-favorable data points continues to get smaller and smaller, more people will see this ruse for what it is. Case in point, earlier this month the Department of Health and Human Services released its latest projections for enrollment in the ObamaCare exchanges. For anyone who has an interest—political, financial or otherwise—in defending the Affordable Care Act, the numbers are not good, and I am being kind when I say that.

The Obama administration projects that in 2016, roughly 1.3 million people will newly enroll in the exchanges. Now, 1.3 million may sound like a big number, however, as always, context is important here. When the law was originally passed in 2010, the Congressional Budget Office projected that we would see an increase of about 8 million enrollees on the exchanges in 2016 compared to 2015. Now HHS is predicting that enrollment will be less than a quarter of that projection.

It gets worse.

In 2010 CBO also projected that by the end of 2016, roughly 21 million patients would be enrolled in plans purchased on the exchanges. Now, HHS projects that the number will likely be less than half of that, probably a little more than 10 million people. In other words, all the rosy claims and predictions we heard at the time the law was passed about the impact these new exchanges would have on insurance markets and premiums were based in large part on the assumption that twice as many people would enroll. Now, by its own terms, ObamaCare is becoming a bigger failure by the day.

Unfortunately, I am not done.

HHS also estimates that there are 19 million Americans who earn too much income to qualify for Medicaid but still qualify for ObamaCare exchange subsidies who still have not enrolled. According to their numbers, a little less than half of these people buy insurance off the exchange without getting subsidies, leaving more than 10 million people eligible for subsidies on the exchanges but still uninsured. The administration also says about half of that eligible-but-uninsured population is between the ages of 18 and 34 and that nearly two-thirds of them are in excellent or very good health.

In other words, a huge portion of those refusing to purchase health insurance on the exchanges, even though they are eligible for ObamaCare subsidies, are the same young and healthy consumers that the Affordable Care Act was designed to coerce into the health insurance market in order to subsidize all of the new mandates and regulations imposed under this law.

The exchanges are failing to attract the very customers they need in order to stay afloat. If they cannot attract more of this prized Democratic base, the ObamaCare exchanges—and with them the entire ObamaCare system itself—will collapse under their own weight.

The question now becomes this: What is keeping these young and healthy consumers from enrolling on the exchanges? Why are millions of people opting to pay a fine and forego coverage rather than purchasing health insurance with the aid of a government subsidy? The answer, for anyone who wasn't listening earlier, is costs. According to a recent survey by the nonpartisan Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the vast majority—nearly 80 percent—of uninsured Americans who have looked for insurance said that after weighing everything, they could not afford the purchase.

Sadly, the cost problem is only getting worse. As we learned earlier this year, insurance plans in markets across the country have been requesting dramatic increases in their premiums, and those increases have been confirmed as the enrollment date has drawn closer.

Just yesterday I had a number of representatives from hospitals in New York and around New York City say they cannot continue to handle all of the nonpaying emergency room customers. They don't know what to do, and they are in danger of losing the health care systems they have established.

In Minnesota, for example, there are five insurance carriers on the exchange. In 2016, all five will be offering insurance policies with rate hikes in the double digits between 14 and 49 percent.

In Oregon, premiums for the second lowest cost silver plan on the exchange, the benchmark plan, will go up by about 23 percent. In Alaska, that hike will be more than 31 percent. In Oklahoma, consumers on this benchmark plan will see an increase of more than 35 percent in their monthly premiums.

My own State of Utah will not be immune to this trend, unfortunately. Last week, the Deseret News reported that on average insurance rates for plans on Utah's federally run exchange will be 22 percent higher next year.

Keep in mind that these numbers only reflect premiums and do not take into account potential increases in total out-of-pocket costs, which can include things such as copayments or deductibles.

In a sense, all of this creates a vicious, self-perpetuating cycle. The plans on the exchanges, even with the ObamaCare tax subsidies, are too expensive for millions of the young, healthy consumers whom the exchanges need in order to keep the costs down. As a result, not enough members of this valuable demographic segment purchase insurance, causing plans to become more expensive and leading more insurers to drop out of the marketplace.

None of this should be surprising. From the outset, opponents of ObamaCare, including myself and many of my Republican colleagues, predicted this exact outcome. The cycle moves in only one direction: higher costs, fewer choices, and a health care system that offers poorer and poorer care to the American people. Absent some sort of independent and intervening action to bring costs down, there is no scenario in which this gets better. It will only get worse.

I know that some of my colleagues have some specific intervening actions in mind. For example, they would like to see the Federal Government not only regulate the products offered on the insurance market, but the prices as well. And when the inevitable happens—when no private insurance provider can remain profitable in an environment where both product and price are set by the government—these same colleagues will, of course, want the government to step in and provide a plan of its own. In fact, that was what was in many of their minds at the beginning—socialized medicine. They figured this would push us towards it, and it certainly will if we don't change course. Soon enough, because only the government will be able to provide health insurance without the pesky need to turn a profit, the government's health insurance will be the only available option.

I don't want to imply base or bad motives on the part of those who supported health care—by the way, it was a totally partisan vote—but let's be honest about what is going to happen here. A vast group of people on the left are really hoping that the government can do it all, and the government will pay for everything. Somebody has to feed the government too.

Well, in the eyes of many—including, I believe, a number of my colleagues here in Congress—the only way to end the downward spiral we are currently facing under ObamaCare is, as I have said, to create a single-payer health care system. In other words, socialized medicine—where the government provides health care for everybody. We can imagine how the costs are going to go up when that happens.

I made this very claim back in 2010 when the Affordable Care Act was passed, and left-leaning politicians and pundits said it was a paranoid scare tactic. But now, as ObamaCare's downward spiral is becoming more obvious, I suspect that my argument is seeming less farfetched by the day.

Fortunately, the march toward a single-payer system is not our only option. We can take action right now to right this ship. We can control costs. We can take government out of the equation and give patients and consumers more choices.

There are a number of ideas out there that would accomplish these goals. One of them, of course, is the plan Senator BURR and I have offered, along with Representative FRED UPTON in the House. Our plan is called the Patient CARE Act. I have spoken about it at length a number of times here on the floor and elsewhere. While ours is not the only good plan out there, a number of respected health care experts have analyzed the Patient CARE Act and concluded that it would, in fact, bend the cost curve and make health care more affordable for everybody.

Once again, the failure to bring down costs is easily the biggest of ObamaCare's many failures. Our plan would ensure that Congress does not repeat that failure.

I am well aware that health care policy is a contentious topic around here. I know there are a myriad of views and no shortage of fierce disagreements on virtually all aspects of our failing health care system, but right now, it should be clear to everyone that the so-called Affordable Care Act was grossly misnamed. The law has failed to make health care more affordable, and it has failed to correct far too many of the problems that have long plagued our Nation's health care system. The sooner more of our colleagues—particularly those on the other side of the aisle—recognize and admit this failure, the sooner we can begin to work together on a plan that will deliver real results for the American people and not continue on this spiraling downward path of moving toward socialized medicine where we have one-size-fits-all medicine for the people in this country and, frankly, government running it. That has never worked, and it is not going to work in this country.

We need to revamp this program, and we have needed from the beginning to do so. I hope people will listen. I hope the citizens out there will start to pour it on and let everybody know that this is a disaster and that there are ways we might be able not only to stop the disaster, but also to increase good health care, excellent health care for the benefit of our people.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

TRANSPORTATION BILL AND POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I wish to speak about a piece of legislation that is pending before the Senate and is expected, as I understand it, to be considered tomorrow, and that would be a short-term extension of the Transportation bill.

While I am tired of short-term extensions of transportation bills, it is my understanding that in this particular case a short-term extension will lead us to a long-term transportation bill. I certainly welcome the opportunity to consider something that would meet the needs of our country—its infrastructure needs, our highways, roads, bridges—for a number of years to come. We have to get to the point at which we are dealing with issues over a longer period of time than we do when we do a short-term extension.

It is also important for us to make certain there is certainty so that the Kansas Department of Transportation and other departments across the country, as well as highway contractors and those who use our highways, can have certainty in what the transportation system—the roads, bridges and highways—is going to be.

There is another issue of uncertainty that is out there, and it has to do with positive train control. Included in the legislation, extending the time for us to consider a transportation bill, is a provision that extends the deadline for the final implementation of positive train control, a safety issue that has long had consideration here in Congress, and we are well on our way to having positive train control in our rail transportation system, both passenger and freight. But we need to have an opportunity for that implementation to occur over a slightly longer period of time than what was originally planned when positive train control became a mandate, a requirement upon our railroads.

I am pleased that we are going to consider an extension of the Transportation bill that puts us in a position to deal with a long-term transportation bill. I am also pleased—and I wish to spend just a minute or two speaking—about a provision that is included in that extension, and that deals with extending the positive train control implementation.

I wish to thank my colleague from South Dakota, Senator THUNE. He is the chairman of the committee that I am on, the commerce committee. I thank him for his leadership in advancing this effort and allowing us the opportunity to deliver the certainty that we need on this important issue.

There is no allegation that those who are implementing positive train control are inattentive or that they lack desire; there is no suggestion that it is an undue delay, that they are not doing what needs to be done. Every indication we have from all experts is it has nothing to do with a lack of commitment of the railroads; it has to do with the fact that we can't get there in the time that we had hoped for originally when we set forth this requirement.

We know there is a pending implementation date, a deadline of December 31. We know it is unattainable. It is unattainable despite the fact that billions of dollars have already been spent to get PTC installed as quickly and as safely as possible. However, the reality is that without an extension of that deadline beyond December 31, railroads and shippers—that deadline to take the necessary precautions to alter their service standards is imminent. In other words, if they have to comply, they are going to change their schedules, and that has tremendous economic consequences to businesses that depend upon rail transportation. It creates a significant problem in contingency planning required by a shutdown of the supply chain that uses rail transportation. Congress needs to act now.

There are suggestions that I understand from a number of my colleagues that the extension we are going to presumably be voting on in the next day—that the vote be delayed or that the extension be shortened. I want to express my conviction that it is necessary for Congress to act now, not later. Our Nation's economy cannot afford—those who work in Kansas in agriculture, including our farmers and ranchers, and

those who work in manufacturing, as well as our laborers in the aircraft industry—cannot afford a rail disruption that would occur if we don't do this extension immediately. We need to extend the deadline. As I say, it could have a devastating impact upon thousands of manufacturers, farmers, ranchers, and certainly the passengers who utilize rail transportation—who use Amtrak and other passenger services across the country.

I would indicate to my colleagues that just a few weeks ago my colleague from Montana, Senator TESTER, and I joined in a bipartisan effort to ask our colleagues to express the need for this extension, and we were successful in getting 43 Senators, 12 of whom were Democratic Senators, to sign a letter encouraging our leadership to bring forth this issue. So in a very bipartisan way, with broad agreement, this extension needs to occur.

Incidentally, the House passed this extension by unanimous agreement. Again, apparently there was little controversy or no controversy; it passed by voice vote. So we have significant bipartisan support, bicameral support. The House has already acted, and it is time for us to do so.

I wanted my colleagues to know that many in this Chamber have encouraged this to occur. We are on the precipice of it happening, and we ought not allow it to be delayed or shortened. The extension needs to occur this week. The vote needs to occur this week. The extension needs to be for a sufficient period of time to send that message of certainty and give the rail industry the opportunity to come into compliance in a timeframe that is reasonable and manageable.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor for a very unusual reason this afternoon. It has to do with an attack on for-profit colleges by a longstanding campaign by certain groups and individuals who have been opposed to for-profit colleges. They were able to destroy one out in California, and they are continuing to attempt to make those attacks work on other for-profit colleges.

This is a very unusual situation because what we are seeing take place are conclusions being drawn and action being taken—in this case by the Department of Defense—without due process, as a result of pressure exerted by a Member and Members of the Senate, which then has resulted in action without due process.

Last week there was a very interesting editorial in the Wall Street Journal entitled ''Obama's For-Profit Stealth Attack. The Pentagon punishes Phoenix on orders from Senate headquarters.''

Earlier this month the Defense Department cut off military tuition assistance to new students at the for-profit University of Phoenix, which enrolls about 9,300 servicemembers at its 105 campuses nationwide.

Defense's reasons for discharging Phoenix are vague: A review ''in response to allegations published by the Center for Investigative Reporting'' in a June drive-by on the college found minor breaches in decorum.

Let me emphasize that. I say to my colleagues, there was a story written by an outfit called the Center for Investigative Reporting—I don't know anything about them, and I am sure the Department of Defense does not. But as a result of an investigation by an outfit that none have ever heard of, then action was taken by the Department of Defense. It was not a Department investigation. There was no scrutiny. This is a remarkable case of the Senate exerting influence in a way which is, I think, almost unprecedented.

To wit, Phoenix had distributed unauthorized ''challenge coins,'' which commonly denote tokens of recognition, with military insignia. Yet many non-military outfits including the University of Miami, Boeing and Intel—

And I would point out Southern Illinois University—

hand out such coins.

It is not an uncommon practice to hand out coins.

Phoenix's real offense, according to the Center for Investigative Reporting—

Remember, this has nothing to do with the Government of the United States—

is using the coin to ''imply military support'' for the college.

My friends, at least 100 institutions in America give out challenge coins. I wonder if those institutions have committed grievous crime in the view of the CIR.

Defense also censured Phoenix for failing to obtain approvals from the ''responsible education advisor'' to sponsor events on military bases.

First, it is good to sponsor military events on military bases. Lots of organizations, lots of companies, lots of corporations sponsor events on military bases. In this case, although the responsible education advisor was not consulted, the commanding officer of the base was consulted and gave his approval.

Yet as the CIR article showed, military officials have welcomed the university onto their bases.

They welcomed them because they were honoring those who serve—remarkable.

Phoenix didn't navigate all the correct bureaucratic channels.

In any case, as Defense acknowledges, ''the University of Phoenix has responded to these infractions with appropriate corrective action at this time.''

So as minor as these offenses may have been and technical in nature, they have taken the corrective action, but still a Senator wants them punished.

But political general Dick Durbin, the Illinois Democrat who is leading the charge against for-profits in the Senate, nonetheless commanded the Pentagon to ''bar the company from further access to servicemembers.''

So the department is putting Phoenix on ''probation'' because it finds the ''scope of these previous violations'' to be ''disconcerting.'' What's really disconcerting—

According to the Wall Street Journal.

—is the Obama Administration's politicization of military policy. Defense also cites ''inquiries'' by the Federal Trade Commission and California Attorney General Kamala Harris.

To be clear, Phoenix hasn't been charged with wrongdoing. According to the Defense Department, 96% of the university's servicemembers successfully completed courses, a higher rate than the public Central Texas College . . . and nonprofit Liberty University. . . . In essence, the Obama Administration's military tribunal is punishing Phoenix for being a target of the political left.

Yet this is the White House standard of due process, so Phoenix should be nervous.

I say to my friends and colleagues, they are nervous.

Last year the Education Department, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and Ms. Harris mounted a coordinated campaign that drove for-profit Corinthian College out of business without ever proving misconduct.

This is why I say to my colleagues that I am on the floor because clearly, without any proof of misconduct, with the power of the U.S. Senate, the Department of Education, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and Ms. Harris, they were able to drive a college out of business. And it is obvious what this is really all about. This is all about the constant attacks on for-profit colleges, which is an anathema to some.

Continuing:

Over the last five years, Phoenix enrollment has dropped by half to 220,000 students due largely to the left's assault on for-profit education, which has knee-capped recruiting. . . . Military tuition assistance makes up less than 1% of Phoenix's revenues. However, many servicemembers who are seeking vocational skills later pursue bachelor's and masters degrees at the university under the GI Bill. Veterans make up 20% of the university's enrollment, and many need the flexibility of Phoenix's online courses as they earn a living while going to school.

Most of our veterans, because of their age, have to earn a living while going to school.

The article continues:

The Administration's ostensible goal is to discredit Phoenix and choke off veteran recruitment. But the casualties of its attack will be servicemembers who will now have fewer educational options and opportunities.

Meantime, General Durbin has commanded the Education Department and Department of Veterans Affairs to ''take appropriate action'' against the company. Bombs away.

I wish to point out that recently Senator ALEXANDER, the chairman of the

HELP Committee, Senator FLAKE, and I wrote a letter to Secretary Carter. I will quote from it:

We strongly believe that these earned benefits and educational opportunities for our servicemembers should not be jeopardized because of political or ideological opinions of some Members of Congress regarding the types of institutions that provide postsecondary education to our troops. . . . However, it is our understanding that Ms. Bilodeau's decision—

She is the person who is the DOD's voluntary education partnership head—

and threats of termination of participation in the TA program rely on overly technical violations of the MOU.

What we are saying is we want due process, and these questions that have been asked—we hope we can get an answer sooner rather than later.

Because Senator DURBIN wrote also to other agencies of government, we are also writing to them.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter to the Secretary of Defense from Senator ALEXANDER, Senator FLAKE, and me.

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

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, October 22, 2015.

Hon. ASHTON CARTER,
Secretary, Department of Defense,
Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY CARTER: We write to ask that you review an October 7, 2015, decision by Ms. Dawn Bilodeau, Chief of Voluntary Education for the Department of Defense (''DoD''), to place the University of Phoenix (''the University'') on probationary and potential termination status with respect to its participation in the DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) Program for active duty military personnel. We strongly support efforts to monitor the integrity of colleges and universities serving our nation's servicemembers. However, based on our review of the relevant documents associated with this decision, we are concerned that the DoD's decision is unfair, requires additional review, and may warrant reconsideration.

The TA program is an important benefit that enables active duty military personnel to choose a postsecondary education program that best fits their needs to enhance both career and personal goals. The program also serves as an important tool for the DoD to further the recruitment and retention efforts of our nation's volunteer armed forces. We strongly believe that these earned benefits and educational opportunities for our servicemembers should not be jeopardized because of political or ideological opinions of some Members of Congress regarding the types of institutions that provide postsecondary education to our troops.

As you know, the University of Phoenix participates in the TA program through the DoD's Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which conveys the commitments and agreements between colleges and universities and DoD and ensures that the TA funds are spent wisely to support servicemembers attending quality educational programs. However, it is our understanding that Ms. Bilodeau's decision and threats of termination of participation in the TA program rely on overly technical violations of the MOU, fail to acknowledge any of the University's corrective action or pledged cooperation and are based, in part, on unsubstantiated allegations associated with inquiries not initiated by the DoD.

With respect to the University's violation of DoD policies on the use of official seals or other trademark insignia with ''challenge coins,'' Ms. Bilodeau's letter concedes that ''the University of Phoenix has responded to infractions *with appropriate corrective action at this time*.'' While the University has remedied this infraction, we are concerned that traditional public or private, non-profit universities, including Southern Illinois University, utilize similar challenge coins with impunity. (See attached photographs.) We remain skeptical that the DoD is evenly and uniformly enforcing its policies on all institutions of higher education and appears to be unfairly singling out certain institutions of higher education based on a letter from the Vice Chairman of the Defense Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee. (See Letter to Secretary of Defense, June 30, 2015, attached.) It has also come to our attention that on the evening of October 20th, DoD issued additional new guidance on the use of these coins clearly indicating that the regulatory field remained vague and was not settled.

With respect to the University's apparent failure to obtain specific approval for conducting partnership activities at several military installations, it is our understanding that the University obtained approval from the respective base leadership to sponsor, sometimes at their request, partnership events. While the University may have technically violated the MOU's requirement that the University coordinate with the Education Services Officer, those who have served in the military readily understand and respect the chain of command. Approval from the base leadership should be sufficient to meet the requirements of the MOU regardless of the Education Services Officer's involvement and, should not be cited as a basis for probation and possible termination.

More concerning, however, is Ms. Bilodeau's rationale to suspend participation in the TA program based on requests for University documents by two government agencies that are not in fact the DoD. It is worth noting that a request of documents does not indicate a violation or admittance of guilt. In fact, Ms. Bilodeau appears to agree, indicating that the allegations by other entities have not yet been substantiated. However, without fair warning or a sufficient opportunity to be heard, the DoD informed the University of Phoenix that, among other things, ''no new or transfer students at your institution will be permitted to receive DoD [tuition assistance]'' and it is actively considering terminating its MOU with the University. Ms. Bilodeau's decision to give the University fourteen (14) days to respond to the probation decision effectively puts the University in the position of having to respond to reviews undertaken by agencies other than the DoD. These actions seemingly assume the guilt of the University before they are proven and ignore the remedied infractions identified by and directly within the jurisdiction of the DoD.

The University of Phoenix has a long history of serving working adults and others for whom traditional university schooling is unavailable, including more than 200,000 enrolled civilian and military students spread out across more than 100 locations in 17 states. With almost 20,000 faculty and 8,800 staff in every state and the territories as well as just over 1,400 faculty and 6,300 staff in Arizona alone, the University of Phoenix is a significant member of the Arizona and broader higher education community. Like any organization that chooses to partner with the DoD to serve our servicemembers, the University has a legitimate expectation to be dealt with fairly and reasonably. Given our aforementioned concerns, we believe that the DoD's decision should be evaluated for considerations of fairness and cooperation and ask that you independently and carefully review this bold decision.

To help us obtain a better understanding of the DoD's actions in this matter, and to help ensure that all institutions of higher education—for-profit, public and private, non-profit colleges and universities—are held to the same standard of conduct relative to DoD rules and regulations, we ask that you provide us with the following information by October 30th before you take any additional action on this matter:

1) What are the specific, factual, and evidentiary bases for the DoD's recent decision to place the University of Phoenix on probationary status?

2) Did anyone besides Ms. Bilodeau review this decision? Please provide any internal decision memorandum that reflects that decision when it was originally made.

3) Please describe why the DoD official who reviewed the decision believes he/she can place the University on probation when, as Ms. Bilodeau stipulates in her October 7th letter, the University has already remedied identified infractions of the MOU?

4) Please provide all documents, including communications from Members of Congress, or their staff, and any outside party regarding the University of Phoenix and this matter. Also, provide the guidelines relating to the establishment of a probation sanction or imposition of probationary status against the University of Phoenix.

5) Please provide a list of all institutions of higher education participating in the DoD's Voluntary Education Partnership and/or Tuition Assistance programs that have been placed on probationary status in connection with a violation of their MOU; the reasons each of those schools were placed on probationary status; and whether each such school was given opportunity to make corrective actions before being placed on probationary status.

6) Please provide a list of those schools where the DoD MOU was terminated and the reasons for such termination.

7) Is it the DoD's practice to place both for-profit and not-for profit universities on probation when another federal or state agency makes a civil investigative demand for documents? If so, please identify other instances where this has taken place and the reasons for taking such action.

8) Please list those schools that currently use or previously used challenge coins with DoD official seals or other trademark insignia; indicate whether such schools obtained prior DoD authorization for such use; describe any sanctions imposed for such use; and provide any documents or correspondence relating to such use or sanction determination.

9) Please describe the military chain of command as it relates to the MOU and a decision by the base leadership to permit an institution to sponsor an event on base.

10) If this probationary period is extended or the MOU with the University of Phoenix is terminated, how many active duty military personnel do you estimate will be impacted by this decision?

The TA program is critical to our nation's servicemembers' educational and career opportunities, primarily to prepare them to serve in positions of increased responsibility within the military, but also to prepare them to transition to productive civilian careers. While we support efforts to root out waste, fraud, and abuse, we hope that you will review this situation with great caution and care. The Senate Committee on Health,

Education, Labor and Pensions is additionally in the process of reauthorizing the Higher Education Act and exploring ways to ensure quality at all of our colleges and universities is of utmost importance and concern.

We look forward to your timely response and should you have additional questions, please feel free to ask your staff to contact our Chiefs of Staff Pablo E. Carrillo (Senator McCain), at (202) 224–7123; Chandler Morse (Senator Flake), at (202) 224–4521; and David Cleary (Senator Alexander) at (202) 224–8798.

Sincerely,

JOHN MCCAIN,
U.S. Senator.
JEFF FLAKE,
U.S. Senator.
LAMAR ALEXANDER,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. MCCAIN. We sent these letters to the Veterans' Administration and to the Department of Education requesting that they notify us if further action is taken against the university. We sent these letters because we feel that the Department of Defense's decision and threats of termination of participation by the University of Phoenix in this program were done simply because the Senator from Illinois sent a letter to the Department of Defense highlighting an outside investigative report—an outside investigative report—suggesting wrongdoing on the part of the University of Phoenix.

Let's be clear again. There was no due process here. That is what I want—due process. If the University of Phoenix is guilty of some wrongdoing, I want to be one of the first to make sure the proper penalties are enacted. I do not—I repeat—I do not believe that on the basis of a single investigative report, that action should be taken.

With this in mind, I was stunned to hear once again that the Senator from Illinois is insisting that the DOD not reverse its decision. Given his own involvement in the matter, his suggestion that the DOD not reverse its decision just because Members of this body conveyed concern about the merits of its probationary decision and the fundamentally unfair way that the DOD made it is, in fact, ridiculous.

The whole matter arose from the Senator from Illinois pressuring the DOD to take adverse action against the university. His case was based not on an affirmative finding by the Department that the university engaged in any newly identified acts of substantial misconduct but a report by an outside investigative group. He then sent letters to the Department of Education and Department of Veterans Affairs asking for similar action.

After further review of the DOD's decision, it is my opinion that, No. 1, it relies on overly technical violations of a memorandum of understanding that the university signed with the Department of Defense regarding its participation in the Tuition Assistance Program; No. 2, it fails to reflect the actions the university has taken to correct and identify violations; and No. 3, it is based in part on unsubstantiated allegations associated with inquiries for information by other agencies, not findings of new violations.

In other words, with our letter, we asked Secretary Carter to review a lower level decision to put the university on probation where even the DOD conceded, in its very letter to the university announcing its decision, that ''the University of Phoenix has responded to infractions with appropriate corrective action at this time.''

With respect to the university's proposed violations of DOD policies on the use of official seals or other trademark insignia with ''challenge coins,'' we understand the university has remedied this infraction. But it is worth noting that traditional public or nonprofit universities, including Southern Illinois University, utilize similar challenge coins with impunity. I remain skeptical that the DOD is evenly and uniformly enforcing its policies on all institutions of higher education and appears to be unfairly singling out certain institutions of higher education based on a letter from the Senator from Illinois.

With respect to the university's apparent failure to obtain specific approval for conducting partnership activities at several military installations, it is our understanding that the university obtained approval from the respective base leadership to sponsor, sometimes at their request, partnership events. While the university may have technically violated the MOU's requirement that the university coordinate with the education services officer, those who have served in the military readily understand and respect the chain of command. Approval from the base leadership should be sufficient to meet the requirements of the MOU regardless of the education service officer's involvement.

By the way, the education service officer did not turn this down; they just were not consulted.

In the absence of significant, substantiated findings regarding new, uncorrected violations, the Department of Defense decided to suspend the university from participating in the Tuition Assistance Program based on document requests by two government agencies that are not, in fact, the Department of Defense and does not indicate a violation or admittance of guilt.

We call on our service men and women to serve and protect our interests, often at great cost to themselves and their families. Yet the Senator from Illinois suggests that they are not capable of choosing their own path when determining their postsecondary educational needs.

By the way, on a technical violation of the budget agreement, the Senator from Illinois was one of the leaders in voting against the Defense authorization bill, which was the result of many years of work.

In all cases, opinions should absolutely not be used to essentially target a valued member of Arizona's education community. The University of Phoenix has a long history of serving nontraditional students, such as Active-Duty military and others who tend to delay enrollment after high school, work full time, have dependents, or are single parents for whom traditional university schooling is unavailable. The University of Phoenix has graduated more than 80,000 military and veteran students with postsecondary degrees.

A recent Wall Street Journal article I quoted—and contrary to the preference of this administration, and for the sake of our servicemembers who earned and rely on this educational benefit, I promise I will not let this issue go.

The State of Arizona is proud to have the University of Phoenix as a member of its higher education community.

As the questions that I posted in this letter show, I will continue to look into this action based on the merits of DOD's decision, not ideological grandstanding.

Recently, as a result of this, I received letters from three students who recently graduated from the University of Phoenix.

Andrew Workman of North Carolina said:

University of Phoenix allowed me to work 50 hours a week and pursue my degree at the same time.

Ryan Zulkoski of Nebraska received his master's in nursing informatics in 2013. He said:

I loved my experience and UOPX has opened so many doors for me.

Jim Wallace of Florida said:

I am a UOPX graduate, MBA 2006 and veteran of the US Navy Reserve. In my opinion UOPX led the way in educating working professionals. At the time I started my program, no other institutions offered the ability for me to successfully complete my studies, care for my family and work a demanding job. The bottom line is that it was challenging and I worked hard to complete my degree.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have these comments by graduates printed in the RECORD.

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

Andrew Workman (North Carolina) joined the United States Navy in 2006. After serving 4 years on active duty he is transitioned into the United States Navy Reserve in which he continues to serve not only his country but his fellow Sailors through the Hire Heroes USA organization. ''University of Phoenix allowed me to work 50 hours a week and pursue my degree at the same time.'' Andrew attended a ground campus and found the classes to be diverse and challenging. ''The team projects and presentations helped build my confidence and laid a foundation for me to be successful in the workplace. You have to work with people from all walks of life in the real-world and University of Phoenix built that into their curriculum.''

Ryan Zulkoski (Nebraska) received his Master's in Nursing Informatics in 2013. Ryan has been in the Army National Guard for 12 years and served one deployment to Iraq in 2005 and has many other accomplishments and memberships, including a humanitarian deployment to Nicaragua and participation in Army Honor Guard. He used every last benefit to receive his bachelor's in nursing from University of Nebraska and his

master's degree with UOPX. ''UOPX has helped me build an educational foundation to work in a field that I am extremely passionate about.'' Ryan found the quality of the program to be on par with his undergraduate from University of Nebraska. ''I graduated from UOPX in 2013 and have doubled my salary as a Nurse in less than 2 years. I also have 4 children and a wife, so attending a traditional onsite program was impossible. I loved my experience and UOPX has opened so many doors for me.''

Jim Wallace (Florida)—''I am a UOPX graduate, MBA 2006 and veteran of the US Navy Reserve. In my opinion UOPX led the way in educating working professionals. At the time I started my program, no other institutions offered the ability for me to successfully complete my studies, care for my family and work a demanding job. The bottom line is that it was challenging and I worked hard to complete my degree.''

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, again, I can only point out what the Wall Street Journal said. This is Obama's for-profit stealth attack. It is being orchestrated and carried out by the Senator from Illinois, who has a well-known record of not supporting the men and women who are serving in the military by his latest opposing of the Defense authorization bill on the grounds of OCO. So the men and women who are serving in the military and those who have served with honor obviously have a lower priority for him than his vendetta against for-profit universities. I think it is shameful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 3819 AND EXECUTIVE CALENDAR NO. 356

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate is about to pass a short-term highway extension. This 3-week extension will allow the House and Senate to go to conference on our bipartisan bill and allow that to be signed into law by November 20.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3819; that the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill with no intervening action or debate; that upon disposition of H.R. 3819, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 356; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that following disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the President's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object because I want to make a suggestion.

I ask consent that we modify this matter so that we can pass an amendment to extend the PTC deadline—the deadline for positive train control—to make it a 1-year extension to December 31, 2016, and that that be agreed to. Right now, it is 3 years with a 2-year possible extension beyond that. I ask that it be changed to 1 year, and that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate then proceed to a vote on passage of the bill with my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator so modify his request?

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would state to my colleague from California that this is the practice she and I so often lament when it comes to highway bills, and that is kicking the can down the road. We know full well that a year from now, we will be back here doing this again.

This language, which is agreed upon by both the House and the Senate—Democrats and Republicans of the relevant committees worked very hard to draft consensus language. That is what we have arrived at today. We believe it addresses the situation and provides the correct solution. I think it would be a big mistake to try to modify something that people have worked so hard to get to, knowing full well we will never get what the Senator from California wants to do passed through the House or the Senate.

The House acted yesterday, and acted unanimously. Very rarely do you get a voice vote out of the House of Representatives. Democrats and Republicans in the House came together behind a solution that is incorporated into this base bill.

With that, I object to the request of the Senator from California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I just want to say to my friend I am not surprised, but I am still quite disappointed because I think it is horrible precedent to take a provision out of an underlying bill that we have all worked so hard on and attach it—a 3-year provision, a 3-to-5-year provision, a delay in this safety measure—on a 3-week extension.

Why didn't my friend pull out some of the good things in there for safety, such as the House rental bill, which says you can't lease a car that has been under recall? He didn't do that. I am not blaming him at all. I know it was a process. I know that. We didn't pull out the increased fines on NHTSA for car manufacturers who kill people because of their negligence.

I feel it is a terrible precedent, but I will not object, and I am going to explain that later. Having withdrawn my objection, I would ask that I may have the floor for 15 minutes immediately following the vote, if that is possible, and I would give 5 minutes of that timeframe to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the majority leader's original request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from California?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report H.R. 3819 by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3819) to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 3819) was passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sarah Elizabeth Feinberg, of West Virginia, to be Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration.

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

The nomination was confirmed.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I ask the RECORD to reflect that had the Senate's vote on H.R. 3819 been a recorded vote, I would have voted no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I know Senator COLLINS would like to speak, so the way I would recommend we go is 5 minutes to Senator MANCHIN, 15 minutes for me, and how many minutes for the Senator from Maine?

Ms. COLLINS. I thank the Senator from California. This is not going to

work for me, so I am going to return to my office. I understand this was unanticipated, and that is the way it goes sometimes.

Mrs. BOXER. I am so sorry. This has been a contentious matter.

So I would say to Senator MANCHIN, if you want to go first, then I will follow, and I am sure Senator THUNE will have comments.

Mr. THUNE. I will request, through the Chair, if the Senator from Maine is not going to speak, that I be allowed to speak at the conclusion of the remarks of the Senator from California and the Senator from West Virginia.

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

The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from California.

FEINBERG CONFIRMATION

Mr. MANCHIN. I come to the floor to speak on behalf of the Acting Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, who is no longer acting but now our Administrator and my friend, Sarah Feinberg.

As a native West Virginian, she has the same pragmatic approach to problem solving that we see among our congressional delegation every day. When it comes to politics in West Virginia, it really doesn't matter whether you are a Democrat or a Republican. What matters is if you can get the job done.

During my time in the State legislature, Sarah's father, Lee Feinberg, and I served together. At that time Lee was head of the West Virginia Governmental Ethics Commission, and he instilled in her the same sense of moral responsibility that also led him into public service. Today she sits before the Senate, seeking to continue in public service as the Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, and I am so pleased this has happened.

Over the past 9 months, I believe she has proved herself to be an effective and engaged leader with the courage to make tough decisions and the character to accept the criticism they often incite. She was baptized by fire after being appointed to this position on January 9 of this year and leading the agency's response to five major incidents within her first 60 days at the helm.

On February 3, six people were killed when a commuter train hit an SUV at a grade crossing in Valhalla, NY. On February 4, 14 tank cars carrying ethanol derailed just north of Dubuque, IA. Three of them caught fire. On February 16, 27 tank cars derailed outside Mount Carbon, WV, releasing 378,000 gallons of crude oil and igniting a fire that destroyed a nearby house. On February 24, a commuter train in Oxnard, CA, hit a tractor-trailer at a grade crossing and jumped the tracks. On March 6, 21 cars derailed outside of Galena, IL, near the border with Wisconsin, and five of them caught fire.

I am a firm believer that elected officials need to be on the ground in emergency situations, supporting first responders and assisting those in need, and I was impressed by Ms. Feinberg's response to the Mount Carbon derailment in West Virginia, which I witnessed firsthand. Five weeks into her new job, she executed an efficient and effective Federal response that was one of the best I have ever seen in my experience as an elected official and a public servant.

There are a lot of smart policy people here in Washington, DC, but the best policy in the world will not mean a thing if it doesn't translate into anything in the real word. Sarah's response to the Mount Carbon accident showed me that she understood that, and that gave me faith in her ability not just to lead but to listen to the people we are here to serve.

Over the past 10 years, the increase in domestic energy production has been an engine of economic growth. The Energy Information Administration predicts that growth will continue through 2020. From 2009 until 2014, crude oil production in the United States increased by more than 62 percent—up from 5.35 million barrels per day in 2009 to 8.68 million barrels a day in 2014—and the majority of this product is moving by rail.

In 2008, our railroads moved a meager a 9,500 tank cars carrying crude oil. Last year, that number grew to 500,000 tank cars—a 5,000-percent increase. That is unbelievable.

Unprecedented new challenges come along with the new economic opportunities presented by the growth in domestic energy production, and Ms. Feinberg's experience makes her uniquely qualified to lead the FRA through this transition. As Chief of Staff to Secretary Foxx, she helped the Department of Transportation develop a holistic strategy to improve the safety and security of crude by rail that required coordination between multiple administrations within the Department.

The tough new tank car safety regulations that were finalized in May were dependent on close collaboration between the FRA and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. Sarah's experience in the Secretary's office and her existing relationships throughout the Department allow her to cut through redtape and get the right people in the room to get the job done.

While the new rules do not solve every problem, they represent a major step in the right direction. They satisfy all or part of 10 outstanding National Transportation Safety Board recommendations, including all 4 recommendations that were made in April of this year.

Since taking the helm at the FRA earlier this year, I have been very much impressed with Ms. Feinberg's willingness to tackle difficult issues and engage stakeholders about realistic solutions. In May, she convened a positive train control task force to try to identify opportunities for the FRA to help railroads meet their 2015 deadline and become a real part in this process. I think her proactive approach to problem-solving will be an asset to the FRA and the entire Department of Transportation.

I thank Chairman THUNE and Ranking Member NELSON for moving her nomination through the committee yesterday on a strong bipartisan vote of 19 to 1. I want to thank all my colleagues for not only nominating Sarah but confirming her today. I think she will be a great asset to our country and do us all proud.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I will take my time now. I know my friend wanted to have a little time, so I will yield to Senator INHOFE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, I know the Senator from California was disappointed in a few things that went on procedurally, and I am very much in sympathy. But far more significant than that is the bill we are talking about now. We made a tremendous advance to it just a few minutes ago. We did what the House has already done. We are now extended to the 20th of November.

It is my understanding that the House is going to be taking up—we are talking about the highway bill. A lot of things we talk about around here are not very important. We all have different ideas about what is and is not important, but still we have that Constitution, and the Constitution says what we are supposed to be doing. What we are supposed to be doing here is defending America and roads and bridges. That is what we are supposed to be doing.

Senator BOXER and I—she is a very proud liberal and I am a very proud conservative—have recognized what our duty is when we come here, and the second most important bill every year—not every year, because we have the Defense authorization bill every year, but not the Transportation authorization bill. That is what is important, and that is what we are supposed to be doing here.

What we did a few minutes ago is very significant. We are on the same page as the House, and that is to have a bill done and on the President's desk by the 20th of November, which is going to be right before we have a break for Thanksgiving. It now looks like we are assured of doing that.

I have to say that in working over the years with Senator BOXER, we have worked in a capacity in which she was the chairman of that committee and I was the ranking member; then I was the chairman of the committee and she

was the ranking member. We never changed what we stood for or what we saw as significant in the second most important bill we deal with every year.

I am anticipating we are going to be able to have this 6-year authorization bill on the floor next week. We are going to be dealing with it, and we are going to be passing it. We already know the number of people who have voted for it in the past, so we know where we are. On the other hand, I think this is going to have a privileged motion and go straight in for a conference. I look forward to that, and that makes it all possible.

You have to keep in mind the Senate isn't doing this. The House is going on a Veterans Day recess, so we have to work on getting their job done before the recess so we can do ours while they are on recess, and then we will have a happy ending.

While I do regret there are some disappointments, I have to say this. When we are talking about a bill like this, it means that the left and the right have to get together, and we did. I want to applaud my ranking member, Senator BOXER, for helping us in some of the areas where we are able to shortcut some of the NEPA requirements and expedite some things that couldn't be done otherwise.

Let's keep in mind that if we went ahead and did what we have been doing since 2009, we wouldn't be doing this. We wouldn't be doing any major bills—no bridges, no major bills. This is a great day to see the assurance that this is going to take place, and I applaud Senator BOXER in the joint effort we had on the left and the right in this body. We don't see that very often.

Mrs. BOXER. No, we don't.

Mr. President, I just want to thank my friend. It is such a privilege to work with him on these infrastructure issues. I often say we don't work too well together on environmental issues—maybe in another life we might—but right now, in this life, we work really well on infrastructure. So does our staff. I am proud of them.

I came down here to try and change a part of this extension—and I will explain it later—that had to do with delaying a safety requirement on the railroad. I feel strongly in my heart about it. By the same token, I agree with my friend that we have to get this bill done.

This will be a 6-year authorization, as my friend knows. He insisted on it. We have 3 years of pay-for. We never give up. Maybe somehow a miracle will happen and we will find more. But right now, Senator MCCONNELL protected our pay-fors.

For me, it is a strange day. I am very disappointed in this. I call it a rider that was put on this bill. But I am very pleased that the House is moving forward. My friend cited things that he likes—certainly, expediting some of the rules so we don't get these projects dragged out. My sense of it was that I like the fact that we kept the equitable share. We didn't change the share between transit and roads. We certainly added, with my friend's help, a freight title. So there are many good things. It is a mixed bag for me today. I agree with my friend that we need to move fast on the underlying bill, and I look forward to going to conference.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield for one observation?

Mrs. BOXER. Of course.

Mr. INHOFE. The Senator mentioned the fact that we have a 6-year bill and 3 years to pay for it. That doesn't really concern me for a couple of reasons.

One is that once we start projects, I can assure you that there will be a reshuffling of priorities in this Chamber here, where people will realize the one thing we don't want to do is to start construction on something and then stop. This, I have no question in my mind, is going to take place.

Secondly, we have the same provision in the House as we do in this body, and that is that if for some reason money is not available, nothing else can be done after that 3-year period. We are not going to let that happen. So I think we are going to be in good shape. Job well done.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank the Senator.

How much time remains of my 15 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Ten minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. Since I did yield about 5 minutes to my friend, I ask unanimous consent for another 5 minutes.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Then, of course, Senator THUNE will have all the time that he wants to disagree with most of what I am going to say about positive train control. That is part of the debate that goes on here.

POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I do want to thank Senator THUNE, Senator NELSON, Senator INHOFE, and others who did something good today, which is to allow us to vote to make sure that we have the head of the Federal Railroad Administration. Finally, after 8 months, Sarah Feinberg got a vote. It is very important. I am glad all this wrangling that we had back and forth led to that happy situation because we need her in place. Frankly, we need her in place to oversee this positive train control.

I want to quote what she stated. She stated that worries of a train exploding in the middle of a city have caused her sleepless nights. This is an Administrator who cares deeply about her role in safety.

There was an article written by someone today that said I stood alone in my opposition to moving forward with a 3- to 5-year extension and taking that extension out of the underlying bill and tacking it on to a 3-week highway bill extension. I want to point out that I did not stand alone and I do not stand alone. Senator BLUMENTHAL is hoping to come here later and make his remarks about the fact that he opposed this. I speak here for Senator FEINSTEIN, my great colleague—my senior colleague—who actually wrote the original legislation because these crashes were occurring. And I want to read a little bit from Senator GILLIBRAND, who is on a train headed to a funeral for a firefighter in New York. This is her statement:

> After so many preventable railway tragedies that have led to loss of life, it is an insult to the families who have lost loved ones to let the rail lobby slip a multi-year Positive Train Control delay into a three-week extension. The rail industry has purposefully dragged its feet in meeting its safety requirements, and now Congress is quietly aiding them further. It is without debate that Positive Train Control saves lives. The railroads must work as quickly as possible to implement this life-saving technology, so that the millions of Americans who commute by rail every day can do so safely—and Congress needs to do its job and hold the rail industry accountable.

As I said when Senator MCCONNELL offered the unanimous consent request, I think it is a terrible precedent to place a major safety rollback—I would not call it a repeal; I would say rollback—on a 3-week extension of the highway trust fund. It just isn't right. I am very grateful to the Washington Post for writing a very strong statement—I would say article—about what happens when you don't have positive train control on a train. Positive train control is technology that allows the train to slowly come to a stop if there is a real problem, such as another train crossing or a car.

It was in 2008 when we really moved on positive train control. A horrific accident occurred in Chatsworth, CA, where a Metrolink passenger train and a Union Pacific freight train collided. It was due to a distracted engineer. This preventable accident resulted in the deaths of 25 people and injury to 135 others.

Friends, we are not talking about some scientific experiment here. We are talking about real life, where trains collide, where real people die and get hurt. I have met some of the families.

Afterwards, Senator FEINSTEIN and I got together. She was great, and it was great to work with her. We passed the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, mandating the installation of positive train control on major passenger commuter and freight rail lines by the end of this year, 2015.

Again, I speak for her in my remarks. She is distressed that the 2015 deadline would be extended as much as it was without a chance to really look at the details in the conference, which we hope to have soon.

For more than 45 years—45 years—the National Transportation Safety Board, or NTSB, has advocated PTC technology. This isn't something new. But it wasn't until 2008 that Senator FEINSTEIN and I got the legislation done.

Let me say this. NTSB is amazing. They are the ones who show up after horrible crashes of rail, of plane, and they are the ones who make really important safety recommendations. Well, actually, they work with the FAA. So they are the ones who come forward after an accident. They do the investigation, and they make the recommendations.

Now, this is what they said: If we had put PTC in all those years ago, 146 accidents or derailments could have been avoided with implementation of the PTC, and at least 300 fatalities and 700 injuries could have been prevented. Since the California accident, 14 PTC-preventable accidents or derailments have occurred.

So let's be clear. People are dying and they are being injured because we don't have positive train control.

Now, the good news—the great news for my State—is that Metrolink and Caltrain already have put PTC on. Amtrak has put it on certain of their runs. So it is happening. But some of the railroads are dragging their feet. They have every excuse in the book. Some of the reasons, I think, do need our attention.

For example, there are problems with spectrum, and there are problems with rights-of-way. We can work on that. But as Senator BLUMENTHAL said, instead of giving these 3-year delays, there need to be what he calls metrics so we can ascertain, before they get all this time, what they are doing. Are we going to be faced here in this body in years to come with more requests for delay? Well, if we are not really looking over the shoulder of the railroads, the answer is, clearly, yes. They don't want to save the money. And, by the way, the cost-benefit ratio on this is overwhelming. It is overwhelming.

I said before, rhetorically, that it is very interesting that the only piece of freestanding legislation that was pulled out of the bill and placed on this 3-week extension was this delay in positive train control safety—nothing else, nothing else. This was cherry-picked—nothing else.

I have worked with several Senators because one of my constituents, Cally Houck, lost two daughters who rented a car to go on vacation. They were in their twenties. The car was under recall, but the agency rented it to them anyway. It exploded. They died. Mrs. Houck couldn't believe we didn't have a law that said you can't rent a car that is under recall. I bet, if I asked anybody—any stranger to me—if they think they are allowed to rent a car that is under recall, they would say: Of course not. Well, you can. I have fought for years, and I have gotten help from Senator SCHUMER, and Senator MCCASKILL actually got the bill passed. I am very grateful to her. That is in the underlying bill. Why didn't we take that out and put it on immediately so this can go into effect immediately?

I think the Washington Post gave us what they think. They wrote a story—a very important story—in the front page yesterday or the day before, Monday. I want to just say we all know that there are special interests here. By the way, I like to work with the railroads because they do a lot of good things. They are very powerful, they are very strong, and they have a very powerful lobby. It is not a Republican lobby or a Democratic lobby. It is a lobby that covers everybody.

Let me quote what the Washington Post article notes:

> Rail safety has never been a more pressing issue than it is today. So far, the people who have died in U.S. accidents that PTC could have prevented have generally been crew members or passengers. That could change in dramatic, catastrophic fashion.
>
> The number of rail tank cars carrying flammable material in the United States has grown from 9,500 seven years ago to 493,126 last year.

Let me say that again:

> The number of rail tank cars carrying flammable material in the United States has grown from 9,500 seven years ago to 493,126 last year.

Now, just imagine what happens when this flammable material is involved in a collision. We know. We have seen the balls of toxic fire. Seven trains have derailed this year alone, and their contents exploded.

Now, I understand the pleas for delay. That is why I offered a 1-year delay to my friend, the chairman of the commerce committee. I offered him a 1-year delay. Nobody can tell me that a 1-year delay wouldn't work for now. We can look at it in the conference. If we need to extend it, that is fine. No, we weren't able to get it. To me, the only answer that keeps coming back is special interests earmark provision—special interests earmark provision—because it is the only provision that benefits one special interest that was put on this 3-week extension.

Some people say: Why do you care so much? The House voted by voice vote. Do you know what? They were wrong. They shouldn't have. They shouldn't have put it on this bill. This was put on by the House, and it was wrong, wrong, wrong.

Now, when I spoke with my chairman—my really good friend, Senator INHOFE—on the floor, I did say I am so pleased at the way we are moving in terms of the underlying bill. I believe we will have that bill, and I believe we will have that bill next week. Then why on earth did we have to take this out? If we are moving this bill forward, we didn't have to pluck out one of the provisions. I just don't understand it, other than what the Washington Post wrote in their story.

I have to say that there are 60,000-plus bridges that are deficient—structurally deficient. They are in the Presiding Officer's State, and they are in my State. Why didn't they pull out a couple of worst bridges and say ''fix those bridges''? All they did was pull out a provision that the railroads wanted—not a provision that commuters want, not a safety provision that will save lives. It is very discouraging.

We all know about the Amtrak crash. I am going to show you a picture of that. It was splayed all across the paper. This is a photo of a destroyed Amtrak train in Philadelphia. We all know the disaster that occurred there. This could have been prevented. As a matter of fact, if I remember right, they were about to put positive train control on this stretch. They were getting ready to do it. Look at this—the suffering and the deaths, needless. If there was positive train control and if another train was coming, simply slow down that train and automatically avoid such a disaster as this.

I am passionate about transportation. I am passionate about safety. I know my colleagues are, but we had a very different view about this. I can only say if anything good came out of this, it was the fact that we now have an Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration. I think that was good because I feel better now knowing that someone who really cares about this now has officially been given the power to assert her authority.

I look forward to working with Senator THUNE as we move the underlying bill through. He knows how I feel. I want to thank him because he waited around until we had reached an agreement. I appreciate that because otherwise we could have had a complete shutdown of the entire highway program. We averted that because, with respect for our differences, we worked together all day and have the Administrator in place.

I thank Senator NELSON and his staff as well as Senator THUNE's staff. For me, having that done is something that means a lot and means a lot for safety across the board. I hope we will not be doing this in the future. I hope regular order will prevail. I hope we will not be pulling out important pieces of other bills and passing them as stand-alone bills when we are up against a deadline. I don't think it is the right way to govern. I don't think it is good governance. I think a lot of my colleagues feel the same way.

This is behind us. Now we are going to work together. We are never going to take our eyes off this positive train control. We are going to make sure the railroads are stepping up, doing the right thing—and, by the way, some of them have. I told you two of my railroads have been fantastic. They put it all in place. They met the deadline. There are many others that are close to meeting the deadline, but there are too many that are hiding behind excuses and some that have real reasons why they haven't moved forward. I hope they are watching this today because I am not going away. None of us are going away. We are going to be watching this carefully and making sure this deadline is really a deadline, not some kind of political cover so the railroads can get out of doing what they have to do to save lives. When we

take these jobs, that is our overwhelming responsibility—to protect and defend our people, whether it is abroad or at home.

I again thank my staff, Senator THUNE's staff, Senator NELSON's staff, Senator BLUMENTHAL's staff, Senator FEINSTEIN's staff—I hope I am not leaving anybody out—Senator GILLIBRAND's staff, and Senator MURPHY's staff for getting us to a place where we are accepting this with a heavy heart. We are moving on. We are thankful we now do have in place an Administrator—a wonderful, wonderful Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the one thing the Senator from California and I share is a commitment, a longstanding commitment to getting a multiyear highway bill through here. I hope that is going to happen in the next few weeks.

We did need to move on a positive train control extension, and I am going to get into the reasons for that in just a minute. I think probably the most important fact is, as we look at this particular issue, that nearly every railroad in the country—including every major freight railroad—will not meet what is an unrealistic December 31, 2015, deadline for positive train control.

Positive train control—or PTC—when working as intended, is a critical safety technology that will prevent certain types of rail accidents and save lives. We have the ability to make rail transportation even safer by ensuring full implementation of positive train control.

As the chairman of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I can assure my colleagues that these disruptions would have caused cascading and devastating effects for nearly every sector of the economy and every region of the country. Railroads have already started notifying customers that they will stop accepting certain chemical shipments in late November and early December to ensure that such cargoes are off their system when the existing deadline hits at the end of the year.

As rail-dependent businesses and their customers prepare for the shutdown, they have already started to feel the negative supply chain effects on logistics and inventory management. The House-passed short-term highway extension provided an option to avert this completely avoidable and unnecessary harm.

This is not just about the railroads—contrary to what has been said on the floor that somehow this is a special benefit that only helps railroads. It is about the farmers—many of whom I represent in South Dakota—who depend upon the railroad for fertilizer. It is about the manufacturers and other businesses that depend upon rail for critical inputs, and it is about water treatment facilities that depend on rail for chemicals to purify drinking water. It is about all the workers and the households that benefit from this safe mode of transportation.

Rail-dependent commuters and customers cannot afford a congressionally caused railroad shutdown. That is exactly what would happen if we failed to act. Each day well over 1 million riders in the United States board commuter railroads to get to and from their places of work. Over 2 million people work in industries that use hazardous chemicals hauled by rail, and the gross economic output of these industries alone is over $2 trillion. In fact, the effects of a looming railroad shutdown would have occurred well in advance of the year-end deadline, which is where we are today. Over 130 farmers, manufacturers, and retailers wrote to Congress last week, stating that ''rail customers are already starting to feel the impact . . . [w]ith a shutdown just around the corner rail customers must start putting contingency plans into motion, including adjusting production schedules and workforce loads.''

This isn't just an economic issue. It has major implications for public health and safety. I mentioned earlier water treatment facilities across this country have urged a deadline extension and wrote a joint letter to me reiterating that point. I will quote from the letter, which is what they said: ''Even a temporary interruption of water disinfection chemical deliveries could risk a public health disaster for communities across this country.''

The U.S. Conference of Mayors also urged a deadline extension and wrote that switching from rail to other modes of transportation would lead to additional accidents in our Nation's communities and greater exposure to the risks of hazardous materials.

The Federal Railroad Administration's Acting Administrator, whom we just made permanent Railroad Administration Administrator, has the responsibility for conducting oversight of our Nation's rail network, and she expressed concern at a September commerce committee hearing. She said a rail shutdown would ''lead to significant congestion and it does lead to safety impacts.''

Keep in mind, total train accidents per year have decreased by nearly 50 percent since 2005. Rail is often the safest available way to haul many types of products, especially hazardous chemicals. It would take more than 600,000 trucks on our Nation's roads to replace freight rail, let alone the additional cars and buses needed to replace commuter rail.

When Congress passed legislation in 2008 mandating the implementation of positive train control, it never intended to punish rail customers or to harm the economy, but this law failed to properly consider the complexity and time involved in developing, mass producing, installing, and testing a new technology involving a complex network of new computers and communications equipment deployed on more than 20,000 locomotives and 60,000 miles of railroad track.

There is plenty of finger-pointing to go around as to why it didn't get done. The bottom line is this: After 7 years of work, over $6 billion of mostly private funds spent, and with about 2 months to go before the legal deadline, not one single railroad in this country—commuter or freight—has fully implemented positive train control.

For years, study after study, including those from the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office, found that the 2015 deadline for full implementation of PTC was unrealistic. The independent experts at the GAO concluded that the vast majority of railroads, including all freight railroads, would not meet the deadline by the end of the year.

I am pleased the Senate came together and acted on a solution. The bipartisan, bicameral proposal I helped craft does not just extend the deadline for implementing positive train control, it significantly increases accountability and transparency. Our proposal gives the Secretary of Transportation the authority to fine railroads if they fall behind metrics and milestones on their way to completing installation and full implementation. It requires detailed and publicly available reporting to ensure progress each step of the way.

Under our bipartisan proposal, railroads must implement positive train control by December 31, 2018. To ensure that PTC works as intended, the Secretary has very limited case-by-case discretion to allow railroads additional time for testing and certification but only if railroads complete all installation, spectrum acquisition, and employee training. To qualify for this additional time, freight railroads must have started using PTC on the majority of their territories or track. These accountability-focused changes, with objective criteria and rigorous oversight, are designed to ensure that we never need another extension.

I wish to extend my thanks to our colleagues on the House side—Representatives SCHUSTER, DEFAZIO, DENHAM, and CAPUANO—for their strong bipartisan leadership and collaboration to address this major transportation issue. This issue has been extensively debated in the Senate. This proposal incorporates principles and text that have twice been reported out of the commerce committee and have passed the full Senate in July by a vote of 65 to 34. Let me repeat that. Everything we are talking about today—and it was modified a little bit when we negotiated this with the House—but the basic text, basic framework, basic outline of what we just passed had already passed the Senate as part of the Transportation bill with 65 votes earlier this year. The idea that this is somehow something that is being sprung on Members in the Senate is not consistent with the facts.

I am grateful to Senator BLUNT and Senator MCCASKILL for their partnership and leadership to bring Congress together to ensure that PTC is made safely available as soon as possible. Some have suggested different ways to approaching this issue. At a time when we are making progress to finally end the kick-the-can mentality through the enactment of a multiyear transportation reauthorization bill, this proposal will ensure that we are not injecting that same type of uncertainty into another transportation mode, which is our Nation's rail system.

Attaching the bipartisan agreement on extending the PTC deadline as part of the short-term highway extension solves this problem while keeping pressure on the House of Representatives to pass a multiyear transportation bill that we can then reconcile with the Senate-passed DRIVE Act, the multiyear transportation bill that passed in this Chamber earlier this year.

I wish to applaud Leader MCCONNELL, Chairman INHOFE, Ranking Member BOXER, and Ranking Member NELSON for their continued efforts to push for the completion of a multiyear transportation reauthorization bill. Due to constant pressure from the Senate, as was noticed with last week's markup by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, we can actually see the path to getting a bill done with our House colleagues.

The fact that the short-term extension before the Senate sets a November 20 deadline, along with the House planning to take up a multiyear transportation bill next week, indicates that it is, in fact, possible to soon get a multiyear transportation bill across the finish line.

Nobody should misinterpret my work and my efforts with my colleagues here in the Senate in addressing the harms associated with failing to fix the looming positive train control deadline. As a major part of the overall DRIVE Act, the transportation bill that passed Senate, the legislative text originated from the Senate commerce committee, and I will not be backing down in my efforts to see a host of transportation, safety freight, and rail provisions signed into law in the coming weeks.

Together we have averted the potential harm that would come with a congressionally caused rail shutdown. We have set a realistic positive train control deadline. We have held the railroads accountable and ensured the job is done swiftly and safely. It was important that be done in a swift and safe way.

Earlier my colleague from California quoted a story from the Washington Post that ran earlier this week. The Washington Post editorial board, the very same paper that my colleague from California cited, opined: ''Congress should revise the 2008 legislation to give railroads more time to come into compliance, with consequences for those who fail to produce concrete plans for immediate improvement and meet milestones along the way.''

But the very newspaper that the Senator from California was quoting actually editorialized on their editorial page that Congress needed to fix and to put in place an extension that would allow the railroads to come into compliance. That was echoed by a lot of the large newspapers across the country.

The Chicago Tribune's editorial board wrote:

> PTC is coming. It's just not coming fast enough to meet what was always an unrealistic deadline. So if your commute is a mess come January, don't blame Metra. Blame Congress.

The Chicago Sun-Times editorial board opined: ''Congress should extend the deadline to give Metra and railroads a chance to get the job done.''

The Los Angeles Times editorial board wrote: ''Rather than risk a shutdown of crucial transportation services, Congress ought to fast-track a solution.''

The problem we had here is that we didn't have the luxury of time, and so the vehicle that came over from the House of Representatives, which is a short-term extension of the highway bill, presented a chance for us to address this issue knowing full well that it had to be addressed and that it had to be addressed in a timely way. We have railroads and shippers in this country, that, as I mentioned earlier, have already indicated they are modifying and adjusting their operations and plans right now and notifying customers of the impacts and effects of Congress failing to act in a timely way.

The reason that this needed to be fixed now is that if we hadn't fixed it, we would have started to see the disruptions in our economy that would have come with a shutdown because, as I said, no railroad, to date, has been able to meet the positive train control deadline. We approached this in a way that we felt was reasonable, rational, logical, and kept the pressure on the railroads and required the accountability that is necessary to see this done in a realistic way. I think the end result that just passed the Senate is a good outcome and a good solution, not just for the railroads in this country but for the shippers, farmers, and States such as South Dakota that depend upon those railroads, for the commuters around this country who rely on that form of transportation every day to get to work, and for the thousands and thousands and thousands of people who work in those railroad-related industries across this country. This is one example where Congress demonstrated that it actually could, in a timely way, act responsibly to bring about a solution that will avoid what surely would have been not only an economic disaster but a public safety disaster as well.

I am pleased that our colleagues here in the Senate found a way to approve this today, and I hope, as I said before, that we will continue to keep the heat on to get a multiyear transportation bill through the House and the Senate with this short-term extension through November 20. It gives us a few weeks to complete action on that piece of legislation. But we didn't have the luxury of time nor could we afford to wait to act and to make sure that this positive train control extension was put in place in a timely way.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, by voice vote, this body has extended the highway funding program, which is a good thing. It has also included in that extension a delay in the deadline for positive train control, which was inevitable. None of us opposed a delay in positive train control; what we opposed was an extension of that delay with inadequate accountability and excessive time.

Let's be absolutely clear. This delay in positive train control is really a delay until 2020, not 2018, because when railroads hit 2018, they can apply for 2 more years, and that second extension is dependent only on having completed work on half the system. Much of that determination is within the control of the railroad itself. That will be the 50 anniversary of the NTSB calling for positive train control.

We are not talking about a novel, untested technology. In fact, five railroads will meet the deadline to implement this technology at the end of this year. Clearly, all could have at least sought plausibly to meet that deadline. If they had a reason for failing to do so, they should be required to present it case by case, year by year, with a firm deadline of 2018. That is the system I proposed in the legislation I offered 6 months ago—well before this deadline became an imminent necessity.

Forty-six years ago, two passenger trains collided in Darien, CT, killing four people. There have been similar crashes and catastrophes since that time, resulting in nearly 300 deaths, 6,700 injuries, and incalculable economic loss. The worst of those cases was a crash in Southern California in 2008, killing 25 people. Another took place in the Bronx in 2013. Many of us visited the site in the Bronx and observed the remnants of this derailment and so are closely familiar with it. My colleagues in California and in New York have been ardent advocates of positive train control, and I thank them for their support.

These are examples of only a few of the many instances of death and destruction over decades that could have

been prevented by positive train control. Positive train control could have prevented Spuyten Duyvil. It could have prevented other repeated instances of death and destruction that resulted from trains speeding excessively and thereby derailing. It could have prevented trains from colliding. It could have prevented drivers from ignoring signals. It could have prevented death and injury around the country with economic losses far exceeding the cost of installing positive train control.

Joe Boardman, head of Amtrak and former FRA Administrator, said: ''PTC is the most important rail safety advancement of our time.''

Today, the Senate delayed it by 5 years. There are reasons and there is blame enough to go around. The Federal Government—in all frankness, the Federal Communications Commission—perhaps bears part of that blame in the failure to allocate sufficient spending. But let's be honest today in saying that 5 years of delay was unnecessary. The railroads sought it, and they won it with a threat to shut down railroad service everywhere in the country—an unacceptable outcome. The question is, Can we change this deadline in a smart, responsible way?

Unfortunately, the action today rewards the dilatory with unnecessary delay. Congress has sent a message that these deadlines can be avoided without repercussions and responsibility. That is bad policy. It is a bad process. I regret it. There was a better way to act that would have ensured continued funding for our highways and continued accountability for positive train control, which is indeed the most important rail safety advancement of our time. This is not some abstract, novel system. It has been around. It has been used. It has been tested. I regret that today it has been delayed unnecessarily.

Finally, I wish to congratulate and thank Sarah Feinberg, and the good news today is that her nomination has been approved. I look forward to working with her, and I welcome her as a new source of leadership, which she has already demonstrated. I hope she will act aggressively and responsibly to ensure that positive train control and other safety measures become the law and that the law is enforced as effectively and promptly as possible.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

REGULATING TOBACCO

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about an issue that affects the health of our children in every single State.

I ask unanimous consent that after I have completed my remarks, Senator BLUMENTHAL, Senator MARKEY, Senator BOXER, and Senator WARREN be afforded the opportunity to continue to address the same topic.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. I also invite my colleagues to jump in at any point to exchange views as well.

This issue is one that we have known about for a very long period of time, which is that tobacco addiction destroys lives. I grew up in a family where my mother didn't smoke and my father didn't smoke, but they both came from large families—many brothers and sisters—and it seemed as though every single year when I was young, one of my aunts or one of my uncles died from smoking. They died from cancer. They died from heart disease. They died from emphysema. This carnage was all too apparent.

Anyone who has taken the slightest look at this issue knows that the statistics are just unbelievable, the number of deaths and illnesses caused, the number of years lost, the degradation of the quality of life of individuals. For this reason, it had long been a topic here in the Senate that nicotine—the primary acting element in tobacco—should be considered a drug. It is a drug. It has all of these impacts. We have a Food and Drug Administration, and the Food and Drug Administration should be able to regulate it for the health and welfare of our Nation.

Back in 2009, we debated just such a law here on the floor of the Senate and across the way in the House, and that law was adopted. So we anticipated that in short order regulations would be issued and they would help address particularly the effort of tobacco companies to produce new products designed to essentially produce nicotine tobacco addicts among our children, to entice our children into smoking or chewing and this whole new variety, this continuum of products.

Here we are years later. It is no longer 2009; it is 2015—6 years later and we have no regulation. During that time, a great deal has happened. Many new products have been introduced in the never-ending quest of the tobacco companies to find what they call replacement smokers; that is, young folks who will continue to buy their products as their current customers die because they use their products.

So 6 years have passed and no action out of the administration. Year after year, we have pushed, we have called as Senators, we have talked about it on the floor, we have held meetings with the key officials, and it has always been: We are almost there. We are working on it. We know how important it is.

But while this process has gone along so slowly, millions more of our children have become addicted to tobacco.

One of the main instruments the tobacco industry is using are flavors designed to target children. We can see here on the chart particularly flavors in the e-cigarette category. We have a whole variety. We have coffee. We have cherry. We have apple. We have cherry bomb flavoring. I was told today on the phone that there is a Captain Kangaroo flavor and there is a Scooby Doo flavor. There is a gummy bear flavor. These flavors are not designed to entice adults into becoming smokers because the industry knows that very rarely does an individual start to use tobacco products after the age of 21. It is the youth who experiment, and then the nicotine, as an addictive drug, does its work and turns them into lifetime users. That is where, of course, the money is.

I was asked in an interview today how it is that the tobacco companies say these products are not targeted to children. I responded very simply. It is the big lie. No one, no individual can look at the flavors of these products and not know they are targeting our children.

So what has happened in the last few years is the e-cigarette industry is the most successful of the products that tobacco companies have tested. In fact, in just the last year alone, use by our high school students has tripled. That means we now have 2 million high school—the survey was the previous 30 days, and in the previous 30 days, 2 million of our high school students had utilized e-cigarettes. So the tobacco campaign is working, which means they are hard at work compromising the health and welfare of our children and leading them down a path to suffering and death. That is unacceptable.

So we are here today—a number of us—to simply say to our own administration, our executive branch: Get the regulations done. They have now been forwarded from the Food and Drug Administration, from the FDA, to the Office of Management and Budget, which does the final review of those regulations. Get the regulations done, and make sure they are strong regulations. Do not put in a clause that grandfathers all the products and exempts them from regulations that have been produced up until now. Such a grandfather clause would tear the heart out, tear the guts out of the entire effort to regulate these killer products. And certainly regulate the flavors. That is the key, core strategy of addicting our children. Do not ignore that key, core strategy.

This is something very real that this body debated and decided to do and turn it over to the executive branch. It is way past time for the executive branch to act. So we are asking for quick and powerful, forceful action to stop the carnage that is ensuing from the failure of these regulations.

Several colleagues are coming to the floor to join this conversation. The Senator from Connecticut, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, is planning to jump in next, followed by Senator MARKEY and then Senator WARREN.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am going to yield to Senator MARKEY, if I may, and then follow him in light of the scheduling needs that he may have, and then I will yield to Senator WARREN. Thank you.

Mr. MARKEY. Thank you, Senator BLUMENTHAL, and Senator MERKLEY, thank you for organizing this. Thank you to Senator WARREN and to everyone who is here.

Mr. President, with Halloween just days away, I would like to share some scary facts about nicotine. Nicotine is the main ingredient in cigarettes and is also found in the new cigarettes, the e-cigarettes.

Four decades of scientific research have proved the following: First, nicotine is addictive; second, nicotine affects brain development; third, nicotine combined with tobacco is responsible for claiming millions of lives.

These facts are true, but for years Big Tobacco willfully, consistently, publicly, and falsely denied them. Those lies were exposed at congressional hearings, and thanks to the tireless efforts of anti-smoking and public health advocates, traditional cigarette smoking has declined from 50 percent of all adults to 18 percent of all adults in the United States. How many millions of lives have been saved because of that?

Big Tobacco and the e-cigarette industry are like the undead. Traditional cigarettes are being supplanted by e-cigarettes. Today e-cigarette sales in the United States alone topped $1 billion, and e-cigarette use is growing as fast as the students who are smoking them. The use of e-cigarettes among middle and high school students has skyrocketed, tripling from 2013 to 2014, accounting for upwards of 13 percent of all high school students. That is when my father began to smoke two packs of Camels a day. My father died from smoking two packs of Camels a day.

Nearly 2.5 million young Americans currently use e-cigarettes. Why the explosion in youth e-cigarette smoking? It is because Big Tobacco and the e-cigarette industry are marketing their dangerous nicotine delivery product to children and teens.

Big Tobacco would have our young people think that e-cigarettes are a treat, but they are a cruel trick on those children. The younger a person is when he or she starts using products containing nicotine, the more difficult it is to quit.

We know from years of research that flavors attract young people. That is why Congress explicitly banned cigarettes with flavors like cherry and bubble gum, because of their appeal to young people. So it is very disappointing, but not surprising, that new nicotine delivery products are available in a myriad of flavors, from cotton candy to vanilla cupcake to Coca-Cola.

I wonder what this industry is trying to do. Flavors were outlawed from the traditional cigarette industry. You don't have to be a detective to figure it out because over the past decade we have made great strides in educating children and teens about the dangers of smoking, and now we can't allow e-cigarettes to snuff out the progress we have made in preventing nicotine addiction and its deadly consequences.

We need to ban the marketing of e-cigarettes to kids and teens. We need to ban the use of fruit and candy flavoring clearly meant to attract children. We need to ban the online sales of e-cigarettes to keep them out of the hands of children. The dangers of e-cigarettes are clear. Every day we wait is another day that young Americans can fall prey to harmful products pushed by the tobacco industry.

Last year at a commerce committee hearing, when I asked several e-cigarette company leaders to commit to ceasing the sale of these types of flavored products, a few agreed, but the vast majority have not and will not. Just today the e-cigarette industry trade group, the Tobacco Vapor Electronic Cigarette Association, threatened the FDA after posting on its Web site what the association purports is leaked draft industry guidance under the new deeming rule, tweeting: ''The FDA needs to know we mean business.''

The association got it partially right. The e-cigarette industry should be put out of business.

My father smoked two packs of Camels a day. Back then it was a cool thing to do. For decades Big Tobacco denied that there was any linkage between smoking and cancer. My father died because of that denial of the tobacco industry and the cooperation of the U.S. Congress.

Today electronic cigarettes are no better than the Joe Camels of the past. Through e-cigarettes, children and teens are still getting addicted to nicotine and putting their health and futures at grave risk.

I urge OMB to give America's youth a real Halloween treat by finalizing the deeming rule and stopping the sale of these candy-flavored poisons.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleagues for their very powerful comments, and I have a poster as well. In the spirit of Halloween, mine uses candy. I doubt that children this Halloween are going to receive some of these products—I hope not—when they go door-to-door, but people looking at this poster could easily mistake the candy for the candy-flavored cigarillos or the candy that looks like cigarettes, appears to be tobacco products, or the spit tobacco that is flavored with candy look-alikes.

Today the temptation is to have some fun, use some puns, but I come here in sadness and frankly in anger—sadness that every day thousands of people will become addicted to nicotine and suffer from diseases that tobacco causes, whether it is cancer or smoking-related lung problems, and also tobacco-related problems that can increase the cost as well as the suffering in our Nation.

We are dealing here with indefensible delays in issuing a rule that is necessary to enforce the law. Let me be clear about what is happening. The Tobacco Control Act was passed 6 years ago. All of us thought the provisions of that Federal law would go into effect to protect Americans against the nicotine addiction that is peddled relentlessly and tirelessly by the tobacco industry. We are 6 years later in an administration that is probably the most pro-public health and anti-tobacco abuse of any in our history, and still, 6 years later that law is unenforced, and the reason is there are no regulations.

We are 18 months after the FDA released the rule called the deeming rule necessary to enforce that law. Eighteen months have passed since the FDA acted, 6 years since the law was passed in this body, and still there is no protection for Americans.

This fight goes back years and years, and I was involved as attorney general for the State of Connecticut in helping bring a landmark lawsuit. I helped to lead that lawsuit as one of the States that sued the tobacco companies for marketing to children.

Back then this poster might have been used in court, and I appeared in court to say that the tobacco companies, despite their denials, were marketing and pitching to children by using Joe Camel. Today the playbook is exactly the same. The tactics have changed, but the strategy is the same: using pitches, wrappings, and flavors to target children—not teenagers or college kids—but younger children who are persuaded by the model of their older siblings and friends to begin a lifetime of addiction and disease.

They may be fooled by the candy flavors and the wrappings and the pitches that are used, but we should not be, the FDA should not be, and the Office of Management and Budget should not be fooled. They should not be waiting to issue this rule. It should be issued now.

We have written to them, asking that the rule be issued. A number of us wrote a letter to Shaun Donovan. I very simply asked the President of the United States for no more delays. Do the rule now. There is no excuse for delay and, by the way, time is not on our side. During every year of delay, thousands more children become addicted, and the President of the United States knows about that addiction because he is a former smoker—hopefully it is former, not present—and he knows the power of nicotine because he has worked hard to overcome it.

Let's prevent young people from becoming addicted in the first place. Let's save money and save lives. Please, Mr. President of the United States, issue this rule.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Thank you, Mr. President.

I would like to thank Senator MERKLEY for organizing this event this afternoon and Senators BLUMENTHAL and MARKEY for their work on this.

Smoking produces corporate profits, period. There is the heart of the problem of e-cigarettes. Long after the

science showed that cigarette smoking kills, long after the industry denied and denied, long after millions of people died from smoking-related cancers and heart disease, this country finally got serious about cutting smoking rates.

Much of our attention has been focused on ways to keep the industry from hooking young people, and it is a good approach: If you don't start, you don't have to quit. For decades now public health experts have worked to reduce smoking and to keep kids and teens from becoming addicted to cigarettes. Congress passed the laws and implemented regulations that restricted access for teens. We increased tobacco taxes, and we clamped down on marketing to kids. State and local governments along with the private sector limited smoking in public. Those combined efforts worked. Since the late 1990s, the youth smoking rate has been cut by more than 50 percent.

The most recent effort in Congress to address this issue was the passage of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act of 2009. The late Senator Ted Kennedy fought for years and years to give the FDA authority to regulate the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of tobacco. I stand at his desk today to continue this fight because the law was passed but our Federal agencies have still not fully implemented it, and the tobacco industry continues to target young people.

The industry profits from getting kids hooked early, so it finds every way it can to undermine all the other work we have done to keep kids from getting hooked on nicotine. Because it is harder now to get kids hooked with cigarettes, the industry has turned to e-cigarettes.

Six years after the Tobacco Control Act was passed, the regulations that deem e-cigarettes as tobacco products and make them subject to all of the rules in that bill have still not been finalized. As a result, e-cigarettes remain virtually unregulated at the Federal level—no age limits, no marketing restrictions, nothing but a splotchy patchwork of State and local restrictions. Even though most states ban the sale of e-cigarettes to minors, this is not enough to combat the deliberate and well-financed work of the tobacco industry to hook another generation of kids on their products.

Now, an investigation last year by House and Senate leaders revealed how the tobacco industry is marketing their products to kids. It found that the industry is following the exact same practices of marketing to kids and teens that addicted a generation to cigarettes decades ago. Tobacco companies market e-cigs with cartoons and Santa Claus. They show popular celebrities and beautiful models using e-cigs.

Tobacco companies push e-cigs in flavors designed to appeal to kids—flavors like cherry crush and chocolate treat. Tobacco companies provide free samples at concerts and other youth-oriented events. Tobacco companies advertise on television shows and radio programs that attract large audiences of teens and preteens. To bring it all into the digital age, tobacco companies use all of these tactics online and on social media.

The tobacco industry has done all of this before. It is having the same result. According to the CDC, e-cigarette use by middle schoolers—that is sixth, seventh, and eighth graders—and high school students tripled in 2014 alone. New data released yesterday shows that 21.6 percent of young adults 18 to 24 have used an e-cigarette.

For teens, e-cig use is now greater than the use of all other tobacco products. Look, the tobacco industry is up to its old tricks, but we are not going to fall for them again. After more than 6 years since the passage of the Tobacco Control Act, the Federal Government is finally on the cusp of regulations to rein in the industry's e-cigarette marketing efforts. Every day that goes by without this regulation, the tobacco industry hooks more kids.

We need a strong rule today, and that is why I join my colleagues to urge the Office of Management and Budget to act without delay and to release this important regulation. It is time—no, it is past time to take action, time to push back against the tobacco industry, time to stand up for our families' health.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I would like very much to thank my colleagues for coming to the floor and speaking to this issue, my colleagues from Connecticut, Senator BLUMENTHAL; from Massachusetts, Senator MARKEY; and Senator WARREN, also from Massachusetts.

I must say that this topic of addiction to tobacco and tobacco products being targeted at our children is not one that is only relevant to one State or this State or that State, it affects children in rural America, in urban America, and in every State and corner of our Nation. So there is basically a universal impact. That is probably part of the reason the Senate came together, during a period in which there has been substantial dysfunction and substantial paralysis, and said, no, it is time to regulate these tobacco products as the drugs that they are, but during the 6 years since the bill was passed, we have had no regulation. So I appreciate my colleagues coming to the floor and trying to amplify the message that this is unacceptable, because children will be addicted, they will develop diseases, they will suffer, and they will die because of the inaction in putting the regulations forward.

This is completely unacceptable. During this time, there have been a lot of experimental products put out by the tobacco industry. They have put out finely ground tobacco in the form of mints. They put them into hour glass-shaped candy holders so that when students would put them in our pockets, it would look like a cell phone.

That may not make sense in this age of smartphones, but just a few years ago, in 2009, when this was being test-marketed in my State of Oregon and test-marketed in Ohio, the shape of the most popular cellphones kind of had a little bit of an hourglass shape to it. So the idea was it would look like a cellphone and not like tobacco when you were in school.

They came out with a product of toothpicks made out of finely ground tobacco. They came out with a product of breath strips that you put on your tongue. Can you imagine tobacco to freshen your breath? They were experimenting with everything, but the payday was not toothpicks, it was not mints, and it was not breath strips; the payday product is e-cigarettes.

I am going to put the chart back up about the e-cigarettes. There are two fundamental myths propagated by the tobacco industry. The first is that they are not marketing to youth. Well, let's examine the type of flavors in these products. We have apple—these are just the ones on this chart. We have cotton candy. We have gummy bear. We have watermelon. We have candy crave. We have Red Bull. We have peach.

These candy and fruit flavors are designed to appeal to children and to mask some of the nastiness of smoking. Well, so that is big lie No. 1 from the tobacco industry, that they are not targeting our children. It is absolutely clear they are.

Furthermore, they have to because they know that replacement smokers—getting new smokers to replace those who are dying because of their products requires targeting children because very few people start smoking when they are adults or start using tobacco products when they are adults. The mind of the teenager is the perfect moment to gain traction and produce addiction. That is why the tobacco companies are targeting our children.

The second myth they put forward is that e-cigarettes are simply a wonderful health aid designed to get people to quit smoking. Maybe it is healthier than a cigarette with a tobacco leaf ground up inside of it or a clear liquid nicotine rather than a cigarette or a cigar. Do not believe for a moment that tobacco companies are trying to help individuals stop smoking. They did not do billions of dollars in commerce by getting people to stop smoking. Everything about targeting kids is not about getting individuals to stop smoking but to start smoking. That is the goal, to start smoking, to lead them into a life in which they will spend an enormous amount of money buying a product that is destroying their body.

Eventually they will suffer. Eventually they will die. It will be a heart attack. It will be lung cancer. It will be

a whole host of—emphysema. OK. Maybe not every single individual, but a huge number of folks who become addicted in their youth will suffer substantial health consequences. Even those who don't have cancer or full-blown emphysema will experience other health impacts that make them a less healthy individual and compromise their quality of life.

Again, I thank my colleagues so much for coming to the floor to accentuate this message that we have waited far too long for the regulations to get done to take on this industry and that we are demanding that when the regulation is published—and hopefully that will be very soon, as in days or weeks—that will be a regulation that is written in a forceful, comprehensive fashion, that will not have a grandfather clause that excludes existing products from regulation, and it will not fail to address this powerful instrument being used to target our children, which are fruit and candy flavors.

We ask, now that the Food and Drug Administration has forwarded this decision to the Office of Management and Budget for final decisionmaking, that OMB come out quickly, forcefully, and strongly to address this tremendous blight on our society.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to bring to my colleagues' attention a very disturbing trend that is taking place on us carrying out our constitutional responsibilities. It is up to the Senate, and only the Senate, to confirm—advise and consent—appointments by the President of the United States that require the confirmation of the Senate.

I think the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which I am honored to serve on and act as the ranking Democrat, has acted in a very responsible manner in scheduling hearings and taking action on the nominations that have been submitted by President Obama. I thank Senator CORKER. He has scheduled these hearings in a very timely way and scheduled markups in our committee so we can make our recommendations to the full Senate. That is not true of the Senate as a body. There are currently 16—16—highly qualified nominees who have been recommended for Senate confirmation, none of whom are controversial, who are awaiting action on the floor of the Senate. Some of these nominees have been waiting as long as 10 months, almost a year for action by the Senate. Let me repeat this: Not one of these nominees is being held up because of challenges to his or her qualifications to assume the responsibilities of the position for which that person has been nominated. In each of these cases they have cleared the committee hurdle by unanimous or near unanimous votes in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

So why have we not taken up those nominees for confirmation votes on the floor of the Senate? They are not controversial. They are qualified for the position. The reason is that in each case a Senator has placed a hold on the consideration of that nominee. What does a hold mean? It means a Senator has let their respective caucus know they will not consent to the nomination coming before the Senate either as a unanimous consent request or for a vote on the floor of the Senate. That has been the prerogative of Members of the Senate. They can do that. The way you overcome that is either the Senator eliminates the hold—in these cases each one of the holds have nothing to do with the qualifications of the individual for this position—or the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, brings forward the nomination, if necessary uses a cloture motion in order to get this issue resolved. After all, one Senator should not be able to stop a nomination on the floor of the Senate so we cannot carry out our responsibilities of advice and consent.

Senator MCCONNELL has been unwilling to do that. I understand the challenges of floor time. I fully do. Ten months some of these nominees have been waiting. These are critical missions for our Foreign Service. The reasons these individuals are being held—let me just give you an example—is because of a Member being upset with the Obama administration for taking the Iran agreement to the United Nations for a vote before action in the Senate—having nothing to do with the nominee we are talking about—or concerns about Secretary Clinton or concerns about the Secret Service but not related to the person who was nominated for the position we are talking about. That is just wrong. We have the constitutional responsibility to advise and consent on Presidential appointments.

Let me give some examples that fall into this category of the 16 nominees who are currently waiting for Senate confirmation.

We have the Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations. The person who has been nominated for that is Ambassador David Robinson, a career diplomat with 30 years of public service. He has been the Principal Deputy High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina, one of the most difficult conflict areas in modern times. He has served both Democratic and Republican administrations. He is a career diplomat.

The position we are talking about focuses on prevention and response to mass atrocities and countering violent extremism and election-related violence. I would think that is a high priority for this Senate, to make sure the United States has all hands on deck to deal with these types of international challenges.

Ambassador Robinson has served far and wide under dangerous and demanding circumstances. He was the Assistant Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan. He served as the Principal Assistant Deputy Secretary for Population, Refugees, and Migration. He served as U.S. Ambassador to Guyana from 2006 to 2008 and as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana, from 2003 to 2006. He also served as the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Paraguay from 2000 to 2003.

He is a highly qualified individual who has shown a clear dedication and commitment to serving his country. He has been waiting almost 7 months for the Senate to act on his nomination.

I wish to cite another example, the State Department's Legal Adviser, Brian Egan. He has served both Republican and Democratic administrations. This a critical mission, the Legal Adviser. Just today, in a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we had General Allen, and a discussion ensued as to the legal authority we have in regard to some of our activities. It would be good to have a confirmed legal adviser so we can get those types of answers.

Like Ambassador Robinson, Mr. Egan has served in both Democratic and Republican administrations. He began his career as a government lawyer in 2005, as a civil servant in the Office of the Legal Adviser of the State Department, which was headed at the time by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He has worked in the private sector. He served as Assistant General Counsel for Enforcement and Intelligence at the Treasury Department. He served on the National Security Council staff. He is a nonpartisan and fair-minded individual who clearly has the skills and the ability to lead the Office of Legal Adviser at the State Department. He has been waiting 9 months for confirmation—9 months. He is a person who has devoted his career to public service.

That is no way to treat people who want to give their service to this country in an important role. We need to carry out our responsibility.

At the USAID, the Administrator position has not been confirmed. The USAID Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia has not been confirmed. The inspector general of USAID has not been confirmed. These appointments have been in the Senate for some time.

I have listened to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle talk about the refugee crisis. We are approaching the number of people who are dislocated in this world similar to what we had at the end of World War II. The principal agency that deals with this crisis in the United States is the USAID. We know we have conflict areas all over the world, and we have heard over and over again that the way we deal with this—one of our major tools—is through development assistance. We need confirmed, top management at

this agency. The Senate has an obligation to act.

None of these nominees are noncontroversial. I want to repeat that. They are not being held by a Senator because of anything to do with their qualifications for the position for which they have been nominated. There have been unrelated issues for a long period of time compromising the critical missions of these agencies.

Just as tragically, there are 20 innocent USAID Foreign Service officers who have been held up. These 20 USAID Foreign Service officers are not nominated for Ambassador positions or Assistant Secretary position; these are folks who were plucked from a list of 181 promotions that must be confirmed by the full Senate for the promotions to take effect. In other words, their promotions have not taken effect because of an individual hold by a Senator for reasons unrelated to their performance in office—career diplomats, civil service. These are civil servants who are working hard day in and day out serving their country in both Democratic and Republican administrations. They are not involved in the politics of the Senate, and yet they are the casualties of these politics.

These individuals are called upon to serve in challenging and sometimes very dangerous places. We are talking about a Supervisory Program Officer in Cambodia, the Deputy Director for East Africa Operations in Kenya, the Director of the Democracy and Governance Office in Rwanda, a Senior Advisor for Civilian-Military Cooperation, a Resident Legal Officer for the Resident Mission in Asia, an Education Officer in Honduras, a Regional Legal Advisor in El Salvador, a Deputy Controller for Financial Management in El Salvador, a Regional Food for Peace Officer in Ethiopia, a Regional Legal Advisor in Egypt, a Deputy Education and Youth Office Director in Kenya, the Director of the Food for Peace Program in South Sudan, the Democracy and Governance Director in El Salvador, the Economic Growth Team Leader in Zambia, the Economic Growth Office Director in Ukraine, and a Controller for Financial Management in Rwanda.

I went through that list because I think everyone would acknowledge that these are people who are serving in very dangerous places.

As I mentioned, we had a hearing in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with General Allen, who is doing incredible public service for our representative in the Middle East. He said he wanted to thank the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for the attention we have given to our diplomats.

Often on the floor of the Senate you hear glowing thanks—and I join in that—to the men and women who have worn the uniform of our Nation to defend our freedom. Well, our thanks go equally to our Foreign Service officers who serve in very dangerous positions in order to advance the U.S. principles of democracy and human rights. We know about the casualties we have suffered in that regard. These individuals are entitled to their promotions, and it requires our action. To hold up their promotions for reasons unrelated to their job performance is just plain irresponsible, and we need to take up these nominees.

There are ambassadorships that have been open for way too long. I could mention many of the ambassadorships, but I will just mention two—Sweden and Trinidad and Tobago.

Sweden, of course, is a strategic ally and an Arctic Council member. Azita Raji has been nominated. She is a businesswoman who has been the vice president of J.P. Morgan Securities. She brings her unique expertise from the business sector to help one of our critical Ambassador positions. Again, she is a noncontroversial nominee who has been held up 10 months. Sweden is a critical partner for the United States.

In Trinidad and Tobago, John Estrada has been waiting 180 days for his confirmation. Trinidad is a critical place for the United States as far as drug-smuggling activities that bring drugs into the United States. We need a confirmed Ambassador to lead that fight against drug smuggling into the United States. Again, he is being held up for reasons unrelated to his own qualifications.

I could go through all the 16 nominees. I think I have made my point. My point is that I think the public would be surprised to learn that one Senator could block a nomination of a President, and that is used many times unrelated to the qualifications of that individual for the position for which he or she has been nominated. It has happened in the Senate numerous times, as I have just pointed out.

I think it is the responsibility of the Senate to say enough is enough. It is time for us to act on these nominees so they can continue their public service in a confirmed position to help us in our war against drugs, to help us in our international diplomacy, to help us in development assistance in order to resolve conflicts, and to provide the very best legal advice to make sure that what we are doing is consistent with our Constitution.

To do the services of the people for the people of this country, we have to do our service in the Senate, and that is to take up and vote on the President's nominees to these critical foreign policy positions.

I urge my colleagues to allow us to bring these nominees up for a vote so we can carry out our responsibility and so these people can carry out their critically important missions to the security interests of the United States.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

COMMERCIAL SPACE BILL

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, it looks like there has been a resolution between the House and Senate on a commercial space bill which includes an update. This goes way back 31 years ago. When this Senator was a young Congressman, I actually participated in and sponsored the first Commercial Space Act. Very few people could have envisioned what would happen 30 years later with this legislation, for indeed commercial companies are delivering launch services not only to commercial customers, such as all of our satellites, GPS systems, and some communication satellites, but also government payloads for the U.S. Government, obviously Air Force payloads, and various other intel satellites and satellites for foreign countries.

Our American space launchers are putting these satellites up into space, and of course it has revolutionized our daily life. How many among us are so accustomed to using this device to look up the location of an address? How do you think that is happening? It is happening because we have hundreds of satellites up there in the GPS system—scores of satellites—that give you precise locations of any point on the globe where one might want to visit. These devices have gotten so sophisticated that they talk to you and say: Go 600 feet and turn right on such and such street and then turn left. It is just amazing. This doesn't just happen. It happens because of our space industry and in particular our commercial space industry.

Since this Senator, as a young Congressman, got into this in the beginning, which was about 31 years ago, we have had to update this legislation. A lot of things have happened, and now there are very significant things that are happening. For the past decade, we have had a national laboratory in space, which is one component of what is happening, and it is known as the International Space Station. There are six human beings up there. There is an international crew, which includes American astronauts, and one of them, by the way, has now completed 6 months of a 1-year stay so we can study the effects on the human body after a long duration in space. That will help us so we can be ready to go to Mars with human beings in the decade of the 2030s.

There are other activities on the space station that are commercial activities. There are all kinds of pharmaceutical experiments that are going on. As a matter of fact, there are drug trials right now, and the FDA, having used the properties of zero G on the International Space Station, is developing vaccines for salmonella and

MRSA. If using the properties of zero G may help us to develop vaccines that help us with diseases and bacteria on Earth, then that is a significant accomplishment. Those are some of the commercial activities that are taking place in space.

As we think way into the future, we could be mining other planets, and we could certainly be mining asteroids. Wouldn't it be nice if we found an asteroid that was suddenly full of diamonds. We don't even have to stretch our imagination that far. There are all kinds of elements on these asteroids.

This legislation should be cleared later on tonight and in the morning by both sides. Once it has been cleared, we can take the House bill that is down here, amend it on the Senate bill, and send it back to the House. The House has agreed with the far-reaching thought of mining on asteroids, which will be considered intellectual property so it is preserved for the commercial sector and that would be their property.

This whole commercial space business today, including launching and some of the other activities, unbelievably, is a $330 billion industry. The commercial launch industry started out on American rockets. Over the course of the last three decades, our launchers were more expensive, and so international competitors came into this—the Russians, in some cases using old Soviet rockets, and the European Space Agency launched the Ariane rocket, which they developed. Other nations also have rockets that offer fierce competition to the American rockets.

The need for this legislation to be passed at this time—by updating the Commercial Space Act—is because we are now seeing commercial enterprises that are set on a road in the NASA authorization bill of 2010 and are becoming so efficient and effective that they are bringing down the cost of launching payloads into orbit. That is also benefitting the U.S. Government, which is buying these launch services in order to get government payloads into orbit. Because of that, we are now seeing some of that international business which went to other countries starting to come back to us. Orbital Sciences has a commercial rocket, and SpaceX has a very successful program. Amazon founder, Jeff Bezos, has a rocket company called Blue Origin and is likewise getting into the commercial space business. There are many others as well.

This is an exciting time for us to be bringing a lot of this activity back to America. Therefore, at the end of the day, what does that mean? More industry, more high-tech, more research and development, more exploration, and more jobs.

So we are seeing increasingly the U.S. Air Force cooperate on their installation, the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, using government property but leased through State or local space authorities, which are then, in turn, leasing to these commercial operators. A good example that has been tremendously successful for the past several years is an Elon Musk company called SpaceX. They contracted with Space Florida, which had worked out an arrangement with the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station for launch complex 40, for that to be the SpaceX launchpad. They have been enormously successful. They have not only launched government payloads—the NASA cargo to and from the space station—but they have also launched other commercial payloads, government payloads of foreign countries, as well as government payloads of the U.S. Government.

Eventually, that commercial space company, along with the Boeing Company, will be the ones that, in just 2 years, will launch American astronauts on American rockets for the first time since the shutdown of the space shuttle back in 2011—American astronauts on American rockets to and from our international space station. Those two companies are competing for it, but it doesn't mean that just one of the two necessarily wins the competition. Both could be the providers for NASA of ways for us to get Americans on American rockets to our own international space station instead of having to rely on the Russian—very proven and very dependable—Soyuz rocket, which is the only way to get our astronauts there at the moment, until we start flying these other new rockets.

So I wanted to alert the Senate that this is happening as we speak. I hope we get all of the clearances in the Senate later tonight—if not, early in the morning—so that we can get this amended, onto the House bill. It would basically be this: ''Strike all after the enacting clause,'' put the Senate bill on, which we have already negotiated with the House, get it to the House, let them pass it, and get it to the President for signature. I wanted to bring the Senate up to date on what is happening.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRADE ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the body the message to accompany H.R. 1314.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1314) entitled ''An Act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations,'' with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to accompany H.R. 1314, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Lisa Murkowski, John Thune, Lamar Alexander, John Barrasso, Roger F. Wicker, Orrin G. Hatch, John McCain, Thad Cochran, Thom Tillis, Michael B. Enzi, Mike Rounds, Roy Blunt, Susan M. Collins, Shelley Moore Capito.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 2750

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314, with a further amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314, with an amendment numbered 2750.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following:

''This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion to concur with amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2751 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2750

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2751 to amendment No. 2750.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''1 day'' and insert ''2 days''.

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 2752

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to refer the House message on H.R. 1314 to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 2752.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to refer the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314 to the Committee on Finance with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 2752.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following:

''This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2753

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2753 to the instructions of the motion to refer.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''3 days'' and insert ''4 days''.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2754 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2753

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2754 to amendment No. 2753.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''4'' and insert ''5''.

MORNING BUSINESS

POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the unfortunate extension of the deadline for the implementation of positive train control, or PTC.

As one of the authors of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008—which established the PTC mandate—I stand here committed to ensuring that PTC is installed on all our Nation's railways as soon as possible.

Current law states railroads must fully install PTC by the end of this year. For a variety of reasons, we all know this is not feasible for all railroads. But we can't let this drag on indefinitely.

It's a matter of public safety. We must get this done.

The focus of the current debate has been on why an extension of the mandate is necessary, but I would like to take a step back and remind my colleagues why the mandate itself is necessary.

On September 12, 2008, the inattentive conductor of a Metrolink train—a commuter railroad in the Los Angeles area—missed a red light and entered a stretch of single track going the wrong way.

The train collided with a Union Pacific freight train, which completely demolished the first commuter car. The accident killed 25 and injured more than 100.

This was an absolute tragedy for my State and the country.

What is even more tragic: It was 100 percent preventable. Had PTC been installed, we would have avoided this tragedy.

The National Transportation Safety Board has been recommending the installation of PTC since an accident in Connecticut in 1969.

This technology is lifesaving. It prevents train-to-train collisions and overspeed derailments and other rail dangers.

PTC could have saved 25 lives in Chatsworth. In fact, PTC could have saved at least 288 lives and prevented more than 6,500 injuries in accidents across 36 States since 1969.

In 2008, at long last, Congress passed a law requiring PTC implementation by the end of 2015, giving railroads 7 years to comply.

It is extremely disappointing that most railroads will not meet this deadline.

It didn't have to be this way.

The passenger railroads in California took this legal and moral imperative seriously. They committed resources.

In fact, Metrolink will be the first system in the Nation to fully implement positive train control when the Federal Railroad Administration gives its final certification by the end of this year.

The Bay Area is also well ahead of the curve. Caltrain will begin operating PTC on its line between Gilroy and San Francisco by the end of the year, with final certification expected early next year.

These stories show that it can be done on time.

But the sad fact is few railroads will meet the 2015 deadline as mandated by law.

Yes, there were some unanticipated challenges and procedural hurdles that have contributed to the delay.

But more devastating were legal challenges from the industry and railroads failing to commit the necessary resources.

So here we are today, debating an extension.

Let me be very clear: the PTC extension provision the House sent over is flawed.

In my view, we need to be forcing railroads to implement this as soon as possible, and the House proposal fails to do that.

Instead, it gives all railroads a blanket extension until 2018, even those that would be done well before then.

The Secretary of Transportation can take enforcement actions against railroads that miss certain annual milestones between now and 2018, but the railroads themselves get to establish those milestones in the first place.

After the 3-year blanket extension, railroads can request an additional 2-year extension, so long as a railroad is about halfway complete with implementation.

That means they will have until 2020—12 years after Congress first mandated the technology and 50 years since the National Transportation Safety Board began calling for it.

This is effectively a 5-year extension, precisely what railroads have been lobbying for.

There are better options available.

In fact, we anticipated the need for an extension years ago and worked to find reasonable compromises.

First, in 2012, we tried to modify the mandate.

I supported a provision that passed the Senate in that year's transportation reauthorization bill.

It would have kept the deadline in 2015, but allowed the administration to grant up to three 1-year extensions to railroads on a case-by-case basis only when necessary and where railroads were working diligently.

But the railroads wanted 5 years, and the provision was dropped from the final bill.

Then earlier this year, debate began anew.

The Commerce Committee approved a bill that would provide railroads with a blanket extension of 5 to 7 years.

I thought that was reckless and unnecessarily long.

Together with several of my colleagues, we reintroduced separate legislation along the lines of the provision that passed the Senate in 2012.

This started negotiations that led to the two different provisions now included in the House and Senate transportation reauthorization bills.

These provisions are each much improved from a blanket 5- to 7-year extension, but both remain flawed.

In my view, it would be fair and reasonable for the remaining policy differences between these two provisions to be resolved during conference.

I hope the conference would lead to a policy that takes the best parts of both approaches and would be packaged as part of a bill that provided sufficient resources for the commuter railroads to comply with the mandate. We should let that process play out.

We should not rush to pass bad policy on this 3-week extension.

I now want to take a moment to describe something that has disturbed me throughout this entire process.

That is the aggressive stance of the railroad industry.

As we have seen in public, railroads have threatened to stop service for rail passengers around Christmas and stop transporting certain chemicals before that.

Union Pacific's demand letter was the most explicit, acknowledging that ''this will cause significant economic disruption for our country,'' but that it ''is in the best interest of our employees and shareholders.''

The railroads claim that the fines that will be charged next year by the Federal Railroad Administration would be so draconian that they would be unable to continue operating as railroads.

It is very difficult to believe the government would fine railroads to such an extreme. The government's goal is simply to compel the fastest possible implementation of PTC.

The railroads also say that in the event of a PTC-preventable accident, they would be liable for excessive damages. But as we all know, there is a liability cap for passenger accidents.

And for hazardous materials accidents, the railroads have been shipping chlorine and ammonia for decades. It is offensive that only when a railroad could face full liability for an accident that they find operation without PTC to be unacceptably dangerous.

The railroads' overtly political threats of economic calamity are not constructive. They serve only to create a hysterical atmosphere that prevents meaningful negotiations.

It is entirely inappropriate that the railroad industry would make hostages of America's passenger rail services and chemical shippers in order to secure their favored legislative outcome.

What we are discussing today is a bad proposal. We should be prioritizing public safety. But this House-passed provision does not.

The proper place for this debate is in the long-term transportation reauthorization bill.

It is very unfortunate that this has been attached to a must-pass short term extension of the highway trust fund.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today's extension of the deadline to fully implement positive train control technology is deeply disappointing. Passing this extension means that our rail system failed to make good on its original deadline, despite having nearly 7 years to do so.

There are many reasons for the failure to meet this deadline, and the responsibility for this failure is widely shared. The critical bottom line, however, is that positive train control saves lives. And we were tragically reminded of that fact again last May, when the derailment of a speeding train near Philadelphia killed eight passengers, including a wonderful Michigan native, Rachel Jacobs, and injured 200 others. Had positive train control been in place on this section of track, it could have prevented this terrible tragedy.

I understand that today's extension includes concrete milestones, new progress reports, and stronger oversight by the Department of Transportation to ensure positive train control is a reality sooner rather than later. This needs to be a top priority for all of those responsible for getting this done. This extension should not be seen as an excuse to slow progress. We cannot allow any further delays on installing this essential, lifesaving technology.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, as the Senate votes today on a short-term extension of the highway trust fund and an extension of the deadline for positive train control, I rise to discuss the importance of transportation safety and the need for vigorous oversight as both passenger and freight railroads strive to implement this life-saving technology.

Congress passed legislation 7 years ago that gave our Nation's rail carriers until December 31 of this year to fully deploy and implement positive train control, or PTC, on all rail lines that carry passengers or toxic substances. Some railroads have made the investments necessary to make significant progress in meeting this deadline, and others have been slower for a number of reasons, ranging from the costs to the complexity of the technology.

The necessity of quickly implementing PTC took on a renewed urgency in May of this year when Amtrak train 188 derailed in Philadelphia, taking the lives of eight passengers and injuring hundreds more. PTC could have prevented this accident, and I am grateful the Federal Railroad Administration took swift action with Amtrak to improve safety in certain high-risk sections of the Northeast corridor. But more must be done across the country and as soon as possible.

In recent months, with a deadline looming, Members on both sides of the aisle have heard from railroads as well as downstream producers, shippers, and manufacturers who rely on transporting goods by rail. All stakeholders seem to recognize the importance of using new technology to make our railways safer. What has not had equal consensus is how long it should take for this new technology to be installed and utilized. Recent legislative proposals, including in the Senate-passed DRIVE Act, would have created enforcement loopholes that weaken the tools of Federal safety regulators.

The bipartisan PTC language considered today closes these loopholes and sets a new implementation deadline of December 31, 2018. Railroads will be required to set up implementation plans with clear benchmarks and timelines that will be enforceable by the Department of Transportation.

In what I hope will be very rare cases in which railroads may need an extension beyond that deadline, a limited period, not to exceed 24 months in total, may be applied should the railroad meet strict criteria. These criteria include having PTC already implemented in the majority of its territories, acquisition of all needed spectrum for implementation, installation of all necessary hardware components, completion of employee trainings, and any additional criteria established by the Secretary.

While railroads and commuter authorities face an immense challenge in implementing PTC, now and always, we must place the safety of our citizens above the fear of difficulties incurred by necessary technological change.

As Congress extends the deadline for this lifesaving technology, we must also extend our oversight and commit to meticulous and thorough review of the ongoing implementation process. We should confirm outstanding nominees, including the nominee for FRA Administrator, who has direct oversight responsibilities over PTC. Congress must also invest more in our Nation's infrastructure and enable railroads to access grants and various funding sources to help implement this technology, as well as other critical safety and state-of-good-repair needs. We should remain diligent in ensuring that critical benchmarks and good-faith efforts to install the technology are being made by industry and, if necessary, take actions to ensure compliance.

I urge my colleagues to stand with me in calling for reasonable and commonsense conditions as we work to ensure every train hauling people and toxic materials in this Nation can operate as safely as possible with new technology.

REGULATING ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it has now been more than 6 years since Congress gave the FDA authority to regulate the tobacco industry, and it is absolutely outrageous that we are still waiting for a final rule that would protect our children from e-cigarettes.

What has happened while we wait? E-cigarette use among middle and high school students tripled last year compared to the year before. That means that as many as 2.5 million children are now experimenting with these dangerous products.

While we are finally making progress in reducing traditional cigarette smoking among young people, the soaring

use of e-cigarettes is putting our children at risk of lifelong addiction to nicotine.

Every day that e-cigarettes continue to go unregulated, more and more children and teens are being exposed to nicotine—which according to the Surgeon General poses health risks for adolescent brain development.

E-cigarettes also contain potentially dangerous chemicals like benzene, cadmium, formaldehyde, propylene glycol, and some of the very same nanoparticles that are in traditional cigarettes according to the California Department of Public Health.

But those chemicals are masked by e-cigarette flavors like bubble gum and gummy bear—which are clearly marketed toward children.

And the industry's dangerous targeting of young people is working. New research published in the Journal of the American Medical Association just this week shows that 81 percent of teens who have ever tried an e-cigarette started with a flavored one—81 percent.

Combine those flavors with TV ads airing during the most popular youth TV shows and Big Tobacco is clearly seeking to lure the next generation into a lifetime of addiction to their products. A study published in the journal ''Pediatrics'' last year found that youth exposure to television e-cigarette advertisements increased 256 percent from 2011 to 2013.

This is not an accident. Big Tobacco used the same marketing tactics with traditional cigarettes decades ago—until we stopped them. These companies will not stop until millions more are hooked on nicotine.

So what do we do? We need to protect the health of our children by regulating e-cigarettes just like traditional cigarettes.

The administration needs to issue the final FDA rule to regulate e-cigarettes, which is currently at OMB. It has been more than a year and a half since it was first proposed. While this rule may not go as far as I would like, it is a critical first step, and it must be approved immediately.

First, the regulation should ban the sale of e-cigarettes to minors because it is just common sense. Take these dangerous products out of the hands of our children.

Nearly every State already bans sales to minors—it is beyond time the Federal Government makes this the law of the land.

Second, the FDA should subject products to FDA review before they can be marketed.

Third, the FDA should ensure that e-cigarettes are labeled with health warnings.

Fourth, I want the FDA to go even further and ban flavors and marketing tactics that appeal to children—and ban online sales as well.

Now, we have seen some progress in how e-cigarettes are being handled—like the Department of Transportation's announcement yesterday that it will ban e-cigarettes from checked bags to reduce the risk of fires in flight. But we are still waiting for the final DOT rule prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes on board airplanes—where passengers are subject to the potentially toxic secondhand exposure.

The cost of doing nothing is putting too many lives at risk. The research is clear, and as time goes by, Americans are worried for their health and safety—and parents are worried about the long-term health consequences for our children.

Just listen to what Sondra, from Corona, CA, told me. She says, ''I have worked in our local high schools for almost 15 years. The e-cigarettes definitely need to be regulated for people under 18. I am consistently told by students that 'these are better' than traditional cigarettes. They don't realize the harm and the addictive qualities are still present.''

There is no time to lose. We don't need another public health epidemic just as we have finally started to save lives by reducing cigarette smoking.

I join my colleagues and urge the administration to finalize the pending regulation. We cannot wait another day.

REMEMBERING DR. JIM SAMPSON

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to honor an illustrious individual in both Oregon and the Nation's HIV/AIDS research and treatment community who passed away on October 4 of this year. Dr. Jim Sampson, while born a Georgia southerner, made Portland, OR, his home for the past 36 years. As a father, husband, brother, uncle, and friend, Jim generated an inclusive atmosphere of passion, love, and laughter wherever he went. As a medical doctor and a fervent leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS through research and treatments, Jim brought hope and compassion to his daily interactions with colleagues and patients alike. For Jim, no person or job was too big or too small to embrace.

In 1979, after Jim graduated from Emory University and the Medical College of Georgia, he moved to Portland to become the medical director of the health services division and the HIV/AIDS program at Multnomah County Health Department. At a time when a lack of public education and stigmatization of HIV/AIDS stymied research in America, Jim fought to build a greater understanding of the disease. Because of Jim's desire to see HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment improve through extensive research and because of the way he showed love and hope in his interactions with his patients, Jim helped push the doors open wide in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Over the years, Jim expanded his involvement in the community and the field of HIV/AIDS research and treatment. He would go on to become the chairman of the Oregon Board of Medical Examiners; cofound the Oregon AIDS taskforce; cofound Art AIDS; and sit as executive director and principal investigator at the Research and Education Group, where Jim and his colleagues conducted clinical research. Jim even managed to find time to serve on the board of trustees for the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art and the Pacific Northwest College of Art. Also, over the past 35 years, both Jim and his husband, Geof Beasley, created an unbelievable Sherwood, OR, garden, Bella Madrona, a place where Jim's love of community, advocacy, and family still live on. The Bella Madrona garden has been nationally and internationally recognized, not only for its remarkable beauty, but as the site for many benefits through the years, including human and animal rights, environmental causes, and the arts.

Jim was a valued and loved leader, a healer, and a family man worthy of emulation. With a full and loving heart and an ambitious mindset, Jim selflessly served Oregon and the Nation. While Jim will be remembered by those whose lives he touched, he will especially be remembered as a loving husband and partner of 47 years to Geof Beasley; dedicated father to daughter Adele; and caring brother to sisters, Miriam Tillman and Elizabeth Martin, and brother, George. I honor the esteemed life and career of Dr. Jim Sampson and thank him for his enduring legacy.

CONGRATULATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SKANNER NEWS GROUP

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Skanner News Group, a renowned print and online news publication that serves African and African-American communities in Portland, OR, and the Northwest.

Since 1975, the Skanner News Group has provided in-depth and essential coverage of its community as it relates to politics, social justice, civil rights, art, and food, all while holding true to its mission statement: ''Challenging people to shape a better future now.'' The Skanner certainly has been a catalyst for change. In the late 1980s, it was the Skanner's coverage of the debate to rename Union Avenue in Northeast Portland for Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard that played a crucial role in ensuring the community's request was fulfilled. Whether it is honoring minority-owned businesses or running profiles on the Black Lives Matter movement, the Skanner is there to cover and inform all of us in Portland about the most important issues and topics of our time.

The Skanner's long list of awards is a testament not just to the importance of this publication, but also the quality of its reporting. It has received multiple National Newspaper Publishers Association awards and is a three-time

winner of the West Coast Black Publishers Association's ''Publisher of the Year'' award. As well as the national recognitions are local well-earned accolades that further demonstrate what the Skanner means to readers across the Northwest.

Behind the success of this historic publication is a hard-working team that has been instrumental in building the Skanner these past four decades and positioning it for success for decades to come. I would like to especially acknowledge cofounders Bobbie and Bernie Foster, two people I consider the heart and soul of this operation. Beyond the publication, they created the Skanner Foundation, which runs a scholarship program that awards $1,000 each to the best and brightest young people to help them accomplish their educational goals. Bobbie and Bernie's passion for giving back is a key component of what makes them and the Skanner so special.

In addition to all this great work, the foundation organizes an annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., breakfast that is renowned in Oregon as being an event that justly honors one of the greatest civil rights leaders of our time. I have been privileged to attend the breakfast and know full well what a huge impact it has.

The Skanner News Group is an institution that serves to better our community, by inspiring, uplifting, and informing. I would like to congratulate the staff on reaching their 40th anniversary and wish them the best in the years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING DICK ANDERSON

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Richard ''Dick'' Anderson on receiving the United Service Organization, USO, Volunteer of the Year award. USO Las Vegas proudly offers two locations within McCarran International Airport for our Nation's servicemembers and their families to relax and feel at home. Open 24 hours and staffed by volunteers like Mr. Anderson, each location offers these brave men and women a place to enjoy free electronic stations, entertainment, and food service. I am grateful for all USO Las Vegas does for Nevada's servicemembers, and it gives me great pleasure to see a fellow Nevadan, Mr. Anderson, receive this national award in recognition for volunteering to make this operation a reality.

Mr. Anderson has been an incredible contributor to this organization, dedicating countless volunteer hours to help military families. He serves as volunteer outreach team leader and welcome home/deployment assist team leader. Throughout the past year, USO Las Vegas has undergone great change with the installment of an additional location at McCarran International Airport. During this time, Mr. Anderson offered a great amount of support to the organization and even created the volunteer outreach team to meet the extra need for volunteers at the new location.

Throughout his time volunteering, Mr. Anderson has worked tirelessly to plan numerous events, recruit volunteers, and further expand the organization. His determination has proven to be successful, helping to bring in more than 500 new volunteers since July 2014. From Easter events to fundraising and recruiting, Mr. Anderson has truly put our military community first. Our State is fortunate to have someone like Mr. Anderson—a man of great selflessness and commitment—working to help our Nation's heroes and their families.

There is no way to adequately thank our servicemembers who put their lives on the line in defense of our freedoms. Mr. Anderson is a shining example of the manner in which we should respect our men and women in uniform. He deeply cares for our veterans, working to make each moment he volunteers count. Without a doubt, his work brings greater happiness to Las Vegas' military community.

Today, I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing all of Mr. Anderson's hard work and congratulating him on receiving this much deserved award. Nevada is lucky to have this incredible community member working to support our military men and women, and I wish him the best of luck in all of his future endeavors.●

RECOGNIZING MARCH FARM

● Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate March Farm, a fourth generation family farm from Connecticut, on its 100-year anniversary. Since 1915, when Thomas and Rose Marchukaitis put down $2,500 to buy 114 acres of land, the March family has worked hard to produce delicious and healthy fruits and vegetables for the people of Connecticut.

March Farm, like many of Connecticut's nearly 6,000 farms, is small and family owned. Situated in beautiful Bethlehem, CT, they have a growing community supported agriculture business that now has about 90 members receiving regular crates of produce. They have worked hard to implement efficient, modern farming practices, even as they eschew chemical pesticides and use environmentally sensitive pest mangagement practices. These practices and the bucolic setting they are located in are part of the reason they were recently named Connecticut's ''best farm/orchard experience'' by Connecticut Magazine.

Many of my colleagues may be surprised to think of Connecticut as a farming state, but I am glad to report that farming is alive, well, and growing at home. The movement towards locally produced fruits and vegetables and a growing awareness among consumers about healthy, sustainable food choices has supported a nearly 60 percent increase in the number of farms in Connecticut since the 1980s. And many young people, like Ben March, are leaving desk jobs to rediscover the fulfilment of farming, reinvigorating this vital sector.

These farms are an integral part of the fabric of our communities, but they need our help to continue to thrive. Although small farms like March Farm make up fully 90 percent of all farms in the United States, large operations account for the vast bulk of production and sales of produce nationwide. Small family farms face a number of challenges, not least slimmer profit margins and higher risk. I will continue to fight for small, local farm supports such as beginning farmer and rancher grants and robust farm safety net programs.

March Farm is an example of the best of Connecticut, and I wish them continued success over their next 100 years.●

RECOGNIZING ARROWROCK DAM

● Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the 100th anniversary of Arrowrock Dam, situated in the great State of Idaho and its own ''eighth wonder of the world.'' This landmark is a testament to the vision and hard work of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in both the initial building of the structure and keeping it operational over the past 100 years.

Formerly, the site of a private irrigation venture helmed by Arthur De Wint Foote, the Arrowrock Dam was the grandest project undertaken by the Bureau of Reclamation when it began in 1912. The dam stands at 350 feet high and spans 1,150 feet with a record breaking 527,300 cubic yards of concrete laid on the dam.

The magnificent dam was dedicated 100 years ago on October 4, 1915. It set many records, standing as the tallest dam in the world until a taller one was built in Switzerland in 1924. Arrowrock proved to be a popular tourist attraction in that first year, drawing approximately 12,000 visitors in its first week of operation. The Arrowrock Dam received acclaim from across the country and even the world.

Arrowrock Dam has allowed Idahoans to not only preserve our lands, but also thrive by providing needed irrigation water for agricultural uses. Caring for the land shows a commitment to future generations while using the resources provided for the needs of today. In addition, thousands of people a year enjoy the many recreational activities provided by the dam. We have enjoyed 100 years of protection from Arrowrock, and I look forward to continued improvement of the dam and its service to the people of Boise and other Idahoans.

I congratulate everyone involved in its building, as well as the continued maintenance of this landmark. I wish

them all the best as we all celebrate the past and look ahead to the future of Arrowrock Dam.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY RELATIVE TO THE ACTIONS AND POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN AS DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13067 OF NOVEMBER 3, 1997—PM 30

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Sudan is to continue in effect beyond November 3, 2015.

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan that led to the declaration of a national emergency in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997, and the expansion of that emergency in Executive Order 13400 of April 26, 2006, and with respect to which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13412 of October 13, 2006, has not been resolved. These actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13067 with respect to Sudan.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *October 28, 2015.*

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:32 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 597. An act to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1090. An act to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide protections for retail customers, and for other purposes.

At 5:56 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1314) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1090. An act to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide protections for retail customers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 597. An act to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes.

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–3319. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Importation of Fresh Peppers From Ecuador Into the United States'' ((RIN0579–AE07) (Docket No. APHIS–2014–0086)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 26, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–3320. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of three (3) officers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–3321. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of items not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3322. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Acquisition Regulations: Export Control'' (RIN1991–AB99) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3323. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Regulations, Areas of the National Park System, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Horse Management'' (RIN1024–AE27) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3324. A communication from the Director, Office of Regulations and Reports Clearance, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Extension of the Expiration Date for State Disability Examiner Authority To Make Fully Favorable Quick Disability Determinations and Compassionate Allowance Determinations'' (RIN0960–AH77) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3325. 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 ''Supplement to Rev. Proc. 2014–64, Implementation of Nonresident Alien Deposit Interest Regulations'' (Rev. Proc. 2015–50) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3326. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Applicable Federal Rates—November 2015'' (Rev. Rul. 2015–22) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3327. 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 ''Update for Weighted Average Interest Rates, Yield Curves, and Segment Rates'' (Notice 2015–71) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3328. 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 ''Morehouse v. Commissioner, 769 F.3d 616 (8th Cir. 2014), rev'g 140 T.C. 350 (2013)'' received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3329. 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 ''Request for Comments on Definitions of Section 48 Property'' (Notice 2015–70) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3330. 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 ''2015 National Pool''

(Rev. Proc. 2015–49) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3331. 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 ''Listing Notice—Basket Option Contracts'' (Notice 2015–73) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3332. A communication from the 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 (OSS–2015–1702); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3333. 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 (OSS–2015–1700); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3334. 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 (OSS–2015–1701); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3335. A communication from the 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 (OSS–2015–1703); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3336. 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 15–068); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3337. 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 15–090); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3338. 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 15–079); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3339. 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 15–078); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3340. 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 15–076); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3341. 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 15–055); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3342. 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 15–067); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3343. 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 15–012); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3344. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; OR; Portland, Medford, Salem; Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington Counties; Gasoline Dispensing Facilities'' (FRL No. 9936–03–Region 10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3345. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Arizona; Phased Discontinuation of Stage II Vapor Recovery Program'' (FRL No. 9935–66–Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3346. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Florida; Regional Haze Plan Amendment-Lakeland Electric C.D. McIntosh'' (FRL No. 9936–05–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3347. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of State Implementation Plans for Designated Facilities; New York'' (FRL No. 9936–09–Region 2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3348. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Outer Continental Shelf Air Regulations Consistency Update for Maryland'' (FRL No. 9917–72–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3349. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Partial Approval and Partial Disapproval of Air Quality State Implementation Plans; Nevada; Infrastructure Requirements for Ozone, NO2 and SO2'' (FRL No. 9935–82–Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3350. A communication from the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits'' (29 CFR Part 4022) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–3351. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–165, ''Behavioral Health Coordination of Care Amendment Act of 2015''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3352. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–166, ''Unemployment Profile Act of 2015''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3353. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–167, ''Injured Worker Fair Pay Amendment Act of 2015''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3354. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–168, ''Grandparent Caregivers Program Subsidy Transfer Amendment Act of 2015''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3355. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–169, ''1351 Nicholson Street, N.W., Old Brightwood School Lease Amendment Act of 2015''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3356. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–170, ''4095 Minnesota Avenue, N.E., Woodson School Lease Amendment Act of 2015''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3357. A communication from the Acting Director, Employee Services, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Prevailing Rate Systems; Special Wage Schedules for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Flood Control Employees of the Vicksburg District in Mississippi'' (RIN3206–AN17) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3358. A communication from the Archivist of the United States, National Archives and Records Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Administration's Fiscal Year 2015 Commercial Activities Inventory and Inherently Governmental Activities Inventory; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3359. A communication from the Deputy Director, Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Change of Address for the Interior Board of Indian Appeals'' (42 CFR Part 137) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC–3360. A communication from the Federal Liaison Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes to Facilitate Applicant's Authorization of Access to Unpublished U.S. Patent Applications by Foreign Intellectual Property Offices'' (RIN0651–AC95) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 26, 2015; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–3361. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Atka Mackerel in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XE224) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3362. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; 2015 Recreational Accountability Measure and Closure for Red Grouper'' (RIN0648–XE217) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3363. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; 'Other Rockfish' in the Central and Western Regulatory Areas of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XE213) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3364. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Exchange of Flatfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XE224) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 22, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce , Science, and Transportation.

EC–3365. A communication from the Senior Assistant Chief Counsel for Hazmat Safety Law, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Hazardous Materials: Special Permit and Approvals Standard Operating Procedures and Evaluation Process'' (RIN2137–AE99) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3366. A communication from the Regulatory Ombudsman, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''General Technical, Organizational, Conforming, and Correcting Amendments to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations'' (RIN2126–AB83) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3367. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Design Standards for Highways'' (RIN2125–AF67) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3368. A communication from the Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Organization and Functions of the Board and Delegations of Authority'' (RIN3147–AA03) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 26, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3369. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Pratt and Whitney Canada Corp. Turboprop Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–1059)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3370. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Pratt and Whitney Canada Corp. Turboprop Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0486)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3371. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Viking Air Limited (Type Certificate Previously Held by Bombardier, Inc.) Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0684)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3372. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–1046)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3373. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; CFM International S.A. Turbofan Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0277)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3374. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Lockheed Martin Corporation/Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1419)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3375. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Lockheed Martin Corporation/Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0493)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3376. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Lycoming Engines Fuel Injected Reciprocating Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2007–0218)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3377. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Piper Aircraft, Inc.'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–4085)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3378. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company Turboshaft Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2008–0808)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3379. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Honeywell International Inc. Turboprop Engines (Type Certificate previously held by AlliedSignal Inc., Garrett Engine Division; Garrett Turbine Engine Company; and AiResearch Manufacturing Company of Arizona)'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2012–0913)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3380. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0677)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3381. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Dassault Aviation Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0934)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3382. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3877)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3383. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled '' Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No . FAA–2014–0656)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3384. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–

AA64) (Docket No . FAA–2015–4203)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3385. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No . FAA–2015–3981)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3386. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Schempp-Hirth Flugzeugbau GmbH Sailplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3224)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3387. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2012–0108)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3388. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification of Restricted Areas R–3601A and R–3601B; Brookville, KS'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3780)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3389. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification of Restricted Areas R–3602A and R–3602B; Manhattan, KS'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3758)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3390. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled '' Establishment of Class E Airspace; Springfield, MO'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0559)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3391. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Sheridan, AR'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1338)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3392. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Cottonwood, AZ'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–2270)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3393. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Marshall, AR'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1833)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3394. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Newport, NH'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0037)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3395. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Ponce, PR'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0967)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3396. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace for the following Nebraska towns: Albion, NE; Bassett, NE; Lexington, NE'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0841)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3397. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revocation of Class D Airspace; Springfield, OH'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–1071)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3398. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Ashland, VA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0252)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3399. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace for the following Iowa towns: Audubon, IA; Corning, IA; Cresco, IA; Eagle Grove, IA; Guthrie Center, IA; Hampton, IA; Harlan, IA; Iowa Falls, IA; Knoxville, IA; Oelwein, IA; and Red Oak, IA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0368)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3400. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Stockton, CA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1622)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3401. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace, Revocation of Class E Airspace; Mountain Home, ID'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–1136)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–3402. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airspace Designations; Incorporation by Reference Amendments'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2015–3375)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 23, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–101. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan urging the United States Congress and the United States Department of the Army to accelerate federal funding to improve military vehicle safety from rollover accidents; to the Committee on Armed Services.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 156

Whereas, The United States Department of Defense is seeking to implement fleet management and modernization solutions to meet light tactical vehicle (LTV) requirements while addressing the challenges associated with improving safety, restoring threshold capabilities, maintaining average fleet age, mitigating major component obsolescence, and reducing sustainment and operating costs; and

Whereas, The Michigan National Guard and Michigan military community have been and will continue to utilize the high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV) in their missions to support and protect the United States. Non-armored and up-armored HMMWVs are projected to be in the fleet through 2048; and

Whereas, Preventable deadly rollover accidents continue in the HMMWV fleet. Data from the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Safety Center indicates that a significant number of HMMWV rollover accidents and crashes continue today, resulting in death and injury. Accidents occur outside the United States and also within U.S. borders during peace missions and training exercises, endangering the lives and property of civilians as well; and

Whereas, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration report data indicates that

antilock brake systems (ABS) and electronic stability control (ESC) reduce fatal rollovers by 74 percent and fatal impacts with objects by 45.5 percent. The United States government has mandated ABS and ESC in all road-going passenger vehicles since 2011, and they are now standard equipment on all passenger cars, light trucks, and vans. The technology has been available to the public since 1987; and

Whereas, The HMMWV is not currently equipped with ABS or ESC. The HMMWV threshold operational requirements include ABS and ESC for the entire HMMWV fleet. Therefore, these vehicles need to be brought up to operational requirements; and

Whereas, The Army Product Director Light Tactical Vehicles, the Michigan National Guard, and the industry have successfully developed and tested solutions using commercial off-the-shelf components modified for defense vehicle application. The proven components, obtained from Michigan's high-volume automotive supply base, can be used to retrofit the entire fleet; and

Whereas, Installation of these standard automotive safety enhancement systems will considerably lower the number of HMMWV rollovers and loss-of-control crashes, save lives, and reduce costs; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the United States Congress and the U.S. Department of the Army to accelerate federal funding to improve military vehicle safety from rollover accidents; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate; the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives; the Chairman of the United States Senate Armed Services Committee; the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee; the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Defense; the Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee for Defense; the Under Secretary of the Army; the Commandant of the Marine Corps; the Chief of the National Guard Bureau; the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology; and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

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. KING:

S. 2212. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require all political committees to notify the Federal Election Commission within 48 hours of receiving cumulative contributions of $1,000 or more from any contributor during a calendar year, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. REED, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 2213. A bill to prohibit firearms dealers from selling a firearm prior to the completion of a background check; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Ms. WARREN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2214. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require patient medication information to be provided with certain prescription drugs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 2215. A bill to prohibit discretionary bonuses for employees of the Internal Revenue Service who have engaged in misconduct or who have delinquent tax liability; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 2216. A bill to provide immunity from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. CARPER, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. KAINE):

S. Res. 299. A resolution honoring the life, legacy, and example of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the twentieth anniversary of his death; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. HATCH, Mr. UDALL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. LEE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. THUNE, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. Res. 300. A resolution designating November 7, 2015, as National Bison Day; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 398

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 398, a bill to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 and title 38, United States Code, to require the provision of chiropractic care and services to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and to expand access to such care and services, and for other purposes.

S. 451

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 451, a bill to award grants to encourage State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools to utilize technology to improve student achievement and college and career readiness, the skills of teachers and school leaders, and the efficiency and productivity of education systems at all levels.

S. 488

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 488, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 569

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 569, a bill to reauthorize the farm to school program, and for other purposes.

S. 571

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 571, a bill to amend the Pilot's Bill of Rights to facilitate appeals and to apply to other certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to require the revision of the third class medical certification regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 928

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) were added as cosponsors of S. 928, a bill to reauthorize the World Trade Center Health Program and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001, and for other purposes.

S. 1192

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1192, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to raise awareness of, and to educate breast cancer patients anticipating surgery, especially patients who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups, regarding the availability and coverage of breast reconstruction, prostheses, and other options.

S. 1212

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1212, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Small Business Act to expand the availability of employee stock ownership plans in S corporations, and for other purposes.

S. 1559

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1559, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 1617

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1617, a bill to prevent Hizballah and associated entities from gaining access to international financial and other institutions, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. HELLER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1617, supra.

S. 1726

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1726, a bill to create protections for depository institutions that provide financial services to marijuana-related businesses, and for other purposes.

S. 1773

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1773, a bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to require creditors to inform consumer reporting agencies that certain debts have been discharged in bankruptcy cases.

S. 1789

At the request of Mr. PETERS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1789, a bill to improve defense cooperation between the United States and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

S. 1831

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1831, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 1833

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1833, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to improve the child and adult care food program.

S. 1852

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1852, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to ensure health insurance coverage continuity for former foster youth.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1890, a bill to amend chapter 90 of title 18, United States Code, to provide Federal jurisdiction for the theft of trade secrets, and for other purposes.

S. 1915

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1915, a bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to make anthrax vaccines and antimicrobials available to emergency response providers, and for other purposes.

S. 1966

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1966, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to require alternative options for program delivery.

S. 2035

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2035, a bill to provide for the compensation of Federal employees affected by a lapse in appropriations.

S. 2040

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2040, a bill to deter terrorism, provide justice for victims, and for other purposes.

S. 2042

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 2042, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to strengthen protections for employees wishing to advocate for improved wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment and to provide for stronger remedies for interference with these rights, and for other purposes.

S. 2067

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2067, a bill to establish EUREKA Prize Competitions to accelerate discovery and development of disease-modifying, preventive, or curative treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, to encourage efforts to enhance detection and diagnosis of such diseases, or to enhance the quality and efficiency of care of individuals with such diseases.

S. 2104

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2104, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide relief to Medicare Advantage plans with a significant number of dually eligible or low-income subsidy beneficiaries and to prevent the termination of two star plans.

S. 2133

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2133, a bill to improve Federal agency financial and administrative controls and procedures to assess and mitigate fraud risks, and to improve Federal agencies' development and use of data analytics for the purpose of identifying, preventing, and responding to fraud, including improper payments.

S. 2145

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2145, a bill to make supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2016.

S. 2185

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2185, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the fight against breast cancer.

S. 2192

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2192, a bill to ensure that States submit all records of individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm to the national instant criminal background check system.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 2216. A bill to provide immunity from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, as Chairman of the Senate Aging Committee, I am delighted to be joined today by my ranking member and good friend, Senator CLAIRE MCCASKILL, in introducing the Senior$afe Act of 2015, a bill that would put in place a common sense plan to help protect American seniors from financial fraud.

According to the GAO, financial fraud targeting older Americans is a growing epidemic that costs seniors an estimated $2.9 billion annually.

Protecting seniors from financial exploitation and fraud is one of the top priorities of the Aging Committee. Over the course of the past two and a half years, our Committee has held 15 hearings, six since January, examining how fraudsters find and exploit their victims and what can be done to stop them. The frauds we have highlighted have ranged from the infamous ''Jamaican Lottery Scam,'' that reached its height in 2013, to the notorious IRS phone scam that burst onto the scene this spring, and, more recently, to the shady practices of the pension advance industry. Sadly, not all scammers are strangers to their victims, in too many cases, the senior is exploited by someone he or she knows well.

Although the various scams we have examined differ in scope and structure, one factor is common to all—the fraudsters need to gain the trust and active cooperation of their victims. Without this, their schemes would fail. That is why it is so important that seniors recognize as quickly as possible the red flags that signal potential fraud.

Unfortunately, many seniors do not see these red flags. Sometimes they are too trusting or are suffering from diminished capacity, but, just as often, they miss the flags because the swindlers who prey on them are extremely

crafty and know how to sound convincing. Whatever the reason, a warning sign that can slip by a victim might trigger a second look by financial service representatives trained to spot common scams, who know enough about a senior's habits to question a transaction that doesn't look right. In our work on the Aging Committee, we have heard of many instances where quick action by bank and credit union employees, broker-dealers, and investment advisors has stopped a fraud in progress, saving their customers untold thousands of dollars.

Let me give you an example. Earlier this year, a senior citizen in Vassalboro, ME, was looking to wire funds from his account at Maine Savings Federal Credit Union to an out-of-state location, supposedly to bail out a relative who was in jail. Something about this transaction didn't sound right to the teller supervisor at the credit union. She questioned the customer, who told her he had gotten a call from an ''official'' at the jail, who had instructed him not to speak to anyone about the transaction. Fortunately for this senior citizen, this supervisor was able to spot this as a scam, and her quick thinking saved him from falling victim to it.

In another case, just two weeks ago, an alert bank employee in Nebraska noticed suspicious withdrawals from the checking account of a senior citizen who was a customer of the bank. Not knowing what to do, and without sharing confidential information, this bank teller called the Senate Aging Committee's fraud hotline for guidance. Our staff advised her to contact the local Area Agency on Aging. With the Senior$afe program in place, bank tellers all over the country will know how to respond when situations like this arise in the future.

Regrettably, Federal laws with the important intention of protecting consumer privacy can make it difficult for financial institutions to report suspected fraud to the proper authorities.

Our bill would clarify these laws to encourage banks, credit unions, investment advisors, and broker-dealers to report suspected financial fraud targeting senior citizens to regulators, law enforcement, or adult protective services agencies.

A key feature of the bill is the liability protection it provides: financial institutions and their employees are protected from suit so long as employees are trained in how to spot and report suspected financial exploitation; their reports are made in good faith and on a reasonable basis, and they report to the proper authorities.

Our bill is based on Maine's innovative Senior$afe program, a collaborative effort by Maine's regulators, financial institutions, and legal organizations to educate bank and credit union employees on how to identify and help stop financial exploitation of older Mainers. This program, pioneered by Maine Securities Administrator Judith Shaw, also serves as the template for model legislation developed for adoption at the state level by the North American Securities Administrators Association, or ''NASAA''. The Senior$afe Act and NASAA's model State legislation are complementary efforts, and I am pleased that NASAA has endorsed our bill.

Combating financial abuse of seniors requires regulators, law enforcement, and social service agencies at all levels of government to work collaboratively with the private sector. Financial institutions occupy a critical nexus between fraudsters and their victims, and can play an important role. Their employees, if properly trained, can be a first line of defense protecting our seniors from these fraudsters. The Senior$afe Act encourages financial institutions to train their employees, and shields them from lawsuits when they make good faith, reasonable reports of potential fraud to the proper authorities.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter of support be printed in the RECORD.

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

NORTH AMERICAN SECURITIES ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION, INC.,
Washington, DC, October 27, 2015.

Re The Senior$afe Act of 2015.

Senator SUSAN COLLINS,
Chairman, Senate Special Committee on Aging, Washington DC.

Senator CLAIRE MCCASKILL,
Ranking Member, Senate Special Committee on Aging, Washington DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COLLINS AND RANKING MEMBER MCCASKILL: On behalf of the North American Securities Administrators Association (''NASAA''), I'm writing to express strong support for your work to better protect vulnerable adults from financial exploitation through the introduction of the Senior$afe Act of 2015. Your legislation will better protect seniors by increasing the likelihood that financial exploitation targeting the elderly will be identified by financial services professionals, and by removing barriers that might otherwise frustrate the reporting of such exploitation to state securities regulators and other appropriate governmental authorities.

Senior financial exploitation is a difficult but critical policy challenge. Many in our elderly population are vulnerable due to social isolation and distance from family, caregiver, and other support networks. Indeed, evidence suggests that as many as one out of every five citizens over the age of 65 has been victimized by a financial fraud. To be successful in combating senior financial exploitation, state and federal policymakers must come together to weave a new safety net for our elderly, breaking down barriers to identify those who are best positioned to identify red flags early on and to encourage reporting and referrals to appropriate local, county, state, and federal agencies, including law enforcement.

As you know, state securities regulators, working within the framework of NASAA, are in the late-stages of our own concerted effort to bolster protections for elderly investors at risk of exploitation, including through the development of model legislation to be enacted by states to promote reporting of suspected exploitation. While the approaches contemplated by the recently announced NASAA model legislation and the Senior$afe Act differ in some respects, they are complementary efforts, both undertaken with the shared goal of protecting seniors by increasing the detection and reporting of elderly financial exploitation.

The SeniorSafe Act consists of several essential features. First, to promote and encourage reporting of suspected elderly financial exploitation by financial services professionals, who are positioned to identify and report ''red flags'' of potential exploitation, the bill would incentivize financial services employees to report any suspected exploitation by making them immune from any civil or administrative liability arising from such a report, provided that they exercised due care, and that they make these reports in good faith. Second, in order to better assure that financial services employees have the knowledge and training they require to identify ''red flags'' associated with financial exploitation, the bill would require that, as a condition of receiving immunity, financial institutions undertake to train certain personnel regarding the identification and reporting of senior financial exploitation as soon as practicable, or within one year. Under the bill, employees who would be required to receive such training as a condition of immunity include supervisory personnel; employees who come into contact with a senior citizen as a regular part of their duties; and employees who review or approve the financial documents, records, or transactions of senior citizens as a part of their regular duties.

The benefits of the types of reporting that the Senior$afe Act aims to facilitate and encourage are far-reaching. Elderly Americans stand to benefit directly from such reporting, because early detection and reporting can minimize their financial losses from exploitation, and because improved protection of their finances ultimately helps preserve their financial independence and their personal autonomy. Financial institutions stand to benefit, as well, through preservation of their reputation, increased community recognition, increased employee satisfaction, and decreased uninsured losses.

In conclusion, state securities regulators congratulate you for introducing the Senior$afe Act of 2015. We share and support the goals of this legislation, and look forward to working closely with you as the legislation is considered by the Senate.

Sincerely,

JUDITH M. SHAW,
NASAA President and Maine Securities Administrator.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 299—HONORING THE LIFE, LEGACY, AND EXAMPLE OF FORMER ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER YITZHAK RABIN ON THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. CARPER, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. KAINE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 299

Whereas Yitzhak Rabin was born on March 1, 1922, in Jerusalem;

Whereas Yitzhak Rabin volunteered for the Palmach, the elite unit of the Haganah, the

predecessor of the Israeli Defense Forces, and served for 27 years, including during the 1948 War of Independence, the 1956 Suez War, and as Chief of Staff in the June 1967 Six Day War;

Whereas Yitzhak Rabin served as Ambassador to the United States from 1968 through 1973, Minister of Defense from 1984 through 1990, and Prime Minister from 1974 through 1977 and from 1992 until his assassination in 1995;

Whereas, in 1975, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed the interim agreement with Egypt that laid the groundwork for the 1979 Camp David Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt;

Whereas on September 13, 1993, in Washington, D.C., Yitzhak Rabin signed the Declaration of Principles framework agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, also known as the Oslo Accords;

Whereas, upon the signing of the Declaration of Principles, Yitzhak Rabin said to the Palestinian people: ''We say to you today in a loud and clear voice: Enough of blood and tears. Enough! We harbor no hatred toward you. We have no desire for revenge. We, like you, are people who want to build a home, plant a tree, love, live side by side with you—in dignity, empathy, as human beings, as free men.'';

Whereas Yitzhak Rabin received the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize for his vision and bravery as a peacemaker;

Whereas, on October 26, 1994, Yitzhak Rabin and King Hussein of Jordan signed a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan;

Whereas, on November 4, 1995, Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated after attending a peace rally in Tel Aviv, where his last words were: ''I have always believed that the majority of the people want peace, are prepared to take risks for peace. . . Peace is what the Jewish People aspire to.'';

Whereas Yitzhak Rabin dedicated his life to the cause of peace and security for the state of Israel by defending his nation against all threats, including terrorism and invasion, and undertaking courageous risks in the pursuit of peace;

Whereas, in the years following Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, successive United States Administrations have sought to help Israel and the Palestinians achieve a negotiated two-state solution that ends their conflict;

Whereas today Israel and the Palestinian territories are the site of renewed terrorism and violence;

Whereas the continuation and deepening of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the absence of progress toward a two-state solution has contributed to suffering among both peoples, including being one of several factors driving the current terrorism and violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories; and

Whereas today, more than ever, the leadership of Yitzhak Rabin can be a model for securing peace during a time of conflict: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commemorates the life and accomplishments of Yitzhak Rabin and extends its deepest sympathy and condolences to his family and the people of Israel on the twentieth anniversary of his death;

(2) recognizes and reiterates its continued support for the close ties and special relationship between the people and Governments of the United States and Israel;

(3) reaffirms its commitment to the process of building a just and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians based on two states for two peoples, living side-by-side in peace and security; and

(4) calls on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to quell the current outbreak of terrorism and violence, and to resume work toward a negotiated two-state solution ending the conflict once and for all.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. President, I rise today to submit a resolution recognizing the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

On November 4, 1995, after a major peace rally, then-Prime Minister Rabin was gunned-down by an Israeli nationalist. Rabin's brutal assassination ended the life of a man who lived for peace.

Today, with renewed terrorism and violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories, leaders should look to the example of Mr. Rabin, who forged peace against long odds. His assassin may have ended his life, but his message must live on.

During Mr. Rabin's first term as Israel's Prime Minister, he laid the foundation for peace with Egypt by concluding the Sinai Interim Agreement on September 1, 1975.

The eventual 1979 Camp David Peace Treaty officially ended hostilities between the two nations. Importantly, Egypt became the first Arab state to recognize Israel. Today, because of Mr. Rabin's work, Egypt and Israel remain at peace.

During Mr. Rabin's second term as Prime Minister, he continued to seek peace with Israel's neighbors. He led the effort to sign the Oslo Accords, which created the Palestinian Authority, and which serves as a framework for the creation of a Palestinian state today.

For their efforts, Mr. Rabin, Yasir Arafat and Shimon Peres won the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize.

That same year, Israel and Jordan also signed a peace treaty, making Jordan the second Arab state to establish peace with Israel.

On this, the twentieth anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, I offer my condolences to his family. May they continue to find solace in the legacy of a leader who sought peace when others sought war.

May leaders all around the world look to him for inspiration on how to lead courageously and chart a more peaceful future for one's people.

SENATE RESOLUTION 300—DESIGNATING NOVEMBER 7, 2015, AS NATIONAL BISON DAY

Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. HATCH, Mr. UDALL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. LEE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. THUNE, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. MARKEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 300

Whereas bison are considered a historical symbol of the United States;

Whereas bison were integrally linked with the economic and spiritual lives of many Indian tribes through trade and sacred ceremonies;

Whereas there are more than 60 Indian tribes participating in the Intertribal Buffalo Council;

Whereas numerous members of Indian tribes are involved in bison restoration on tribal land;

Whereas members of Indian tribes have a combined herd on more than 1,000,000 acres of tribal land;

Whereas the Intertribal Buffalo Council is a tribal organization incorporated pursuant to section 17 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as the ''Indian Reorganization Act'') (25 U.S.C. 477);

Whereas bison can play an important role in improving the types of grasses found in landscapes to the benefit of grassland;

Whereas a bison has been depicted on the official seal of the Department of the Interior since 1912;

Whereas bison hold significant economic value for private producers and rural communities;

Whereas, as of 2012, the Department of Agriculture estimates that 162,110 head of bison were under the stewardship of private producers, creating jobs, and contributing to the food security of the United States by providing a sustainable and healthy meat source;

Whereas a bison is portrayed on 2 State flags;

Whereas the bison has been adopted by 3 States as the official mammal or animal of those States;

Whereas the buffalo nickel played an important role in modernizing the currency of the United States;

Whereas several sports teams have the bison as a mascot, which highlights the iconic significance of bison in the United States;

Whereas a small group of ranchers helped save bison from extinction in the late 1800s by gathering the remaining bison of the diminished herds;

Whereas on December 8, 1905, William Hornaday, Theodore Roosevelt, and others formed the American Bison Society in response to the near extinction of bison in the United States;

Whereas on October 11, 1907, the American Bison Society sent 15 bison to the first big game refuge in the United States, now known as the ''Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge'';

Whereas in 2005, the American Bison Society was reestablished, bringing together bison ranchers, managers from Indian tribes, Federal and State agencies, conservation organizations, and natural and social scientists from the United States, Canada, and Mexico to create a vision for the North American bison in the 21st century;

Whereas there are bison herds in National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks;

Whereas there are bison in State-managed herds across 11 States;

Whereas there is a growing effort to celebrate and officially recognize the historical, cultural, and economic significance of the North American bison to the heritage of the United States; and

Whereas members of Indian tribes, bison producers, conservationists, sportsmen, educators, and other public and private partners have participated in the annual National Bison Day since 2012 and are committed to continuing this tradition annually on the first Saturday of November: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates November 7, 2015, the first Saturday of November, as National Bison Day; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2750. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations.

SA 2751. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2750 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill H.R. 1314, supra.

SA 2752. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1314, supra.

SA 2753. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2752 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill H.R. 1314, supra.

SA 2754. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2753 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the amendment SA 2752 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill H.R. 1314, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2750. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; as follows:

At the end add the following:

''This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment.''

SA 2751. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2750 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; as follows:

Strike ''1 day'' and insert ''2 days''.

SA 2752. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; as follows:

At the end add the following:

''This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment.''

SA 2753. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2752 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; as follows:

Strike ''3 days'' and insert ''4 days''.

SA 2754. Mr. MCCONNELL proposed an amendment to amendment SA 2753 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the amendment SA 2752 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL to the bill H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; as follows:

Strike ''4'' and insert ''5''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 28, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 28, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, ''The U.S. Role and Strategy in the Middle East.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 28, 2015, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 28, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room SH–216 of the Hart Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Retirement Plan Options for Small Businesses.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 28, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Assessing the State of Our Nation's Biodefense.''

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 28, 2015, at 2:30 p.m. in room SR–418 of the Russell Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''VA Mental Health: Ensuring Access to Care''.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 28, 2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''The State of Rural Banking: Challenges and Consequences.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my intern Bria Justus, who is participating in a shadow day, have privileges of the floor for the balance of the day.

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

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 293.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 293) supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, commending domestic violence victim advocates, domestic violence victim service providers, crisis hotline staff, and first responders serving victims of domestic violence for their compassionate support of victims of domestic violence, and expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should continue to support efforts to end domestic violence and hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 293) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of October 22, 2015, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL BISON DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 300, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 300) designating November 7, 2015, as National Bison Day.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 300) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 597

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 597) to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, October 29; 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; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 1314.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

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

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:41 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, October 29, 2015, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD RESERVE IN THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203(A):

To be rear admiral

FRANCIS S. PELKOWSKI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 271(E):

To be captain

LADONN A. ALLEN
AREX B. AVANNI
DONALD E. BADER
RICHARD L. BATES
LANCE C. BELBEN
GARY R. BOWEN
MICHAEL E. BRANDHUBER
STEPHEN BURDIAN
MICHAEL E. CAMPBELL
KEVIN M. CARROLL
CHRISTOPHER M. CHASE
KURT A. CLARKE
DWIGHT E. COLLINS
THOMAS F. COOPER
DARCIE G. CUNNINGHAM
RUSSELL E. DASH
MICHAEL J. DAVANZO
DAVID S. DEUEL
MATTHEW J. FAY
PATRICK M. FLYNN
BRIAN C. GLANDER
DOUGLAS D. GOODWIN
JOHN P. GREGG
JOHN L. HOLLINGSWORTH
SCOTT A. KEISTER
KEVIN M. KING
MARC W. KNOWLTON
BRIAN K. KOSHULSKY
MATTHEW W. LAKE
KRISTI M. LUTTRELL
GREGORY H. MAGEE
RYAN D. MANNING
MICHAEL F. NASITKA
ROBERT A. PHILLIPS
CURTISS C. POTTER
JOHN W. PRUITT
THOMAS C. REMMERS
JOHN G. RIVERS
MONICA L. ROCHESTER
WILLIAM E. SASSER, JR.
PATRICK C. SCHREIBER
JOSEPH H.D. SOLOMON
GLENN D. STOCKS
ERIC J. STORCH
JOSEPH SUNDLAND
JAMES P. SUTTON
JASON P. TAMA
PETER R. VAN NESS
MARK VISLAY, JR.
MARK R. VLAUN
AARON E. WATERS
BLAKE E. WELBORN
ADRIAN L. WEST
STEPHEN R. WHITE
CRAIG J. WIESCHHORSTER
JEFFREY V. YAROSH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203(A):

To be captain

SHARIF A. ABDRABBO
MICHAEL K. ARNOLD
JOHN M. CARABALLO
RONALD J. CATUDAL
MICHAEL J. FERULLO
EVAN J. GALBO
JOHN J. GAROFOLO, JR.
JILL I. LUMPKIN
MATTHEW J. MCCANN
DAVID A. MENCHACA
PATRICIA J. QUINN
JENNIFER A. TRAVERS
WILBUR A. VELARDE

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. ARLEN R. ROYALTY

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be admiral

VICE ADM. KURT W. TIDD

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

ALAN D. MURDOCK

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be colonel

OLGA M. ANDERSON
ROSEANNE M. BENNETT
JOHN H. COOK
JOHN A. HAMNER II
TIMOTHY P. HAYES, JR.
MAUREEN A. KOHN
JULIE A. LONG
ROBERT L. MANLEY III
ANDRAS M. MARTON
SEAN T. MCGARRY
OREN H. MCKNELLY
MICHAEL D. MIERAU, JR.
RUSSELL N. PARSON
TRAVIS L. ROGERS
MICHAEL C. WONG
ERIC W. YOUNG

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY AS CHAPLAINS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be colonel

JIMMY C. DAVIS, JR.
CHARLES M. FIELDS
MARK A. FREDERICK
DAVID M. LOCKHART
ROBERT NAY
DARIN A. NIELSEN
KEVIN M. PIES
JAMES E. SCHAEFER
OLEN Z. SELLERS
SCOTT R. SHERRETZ
DAVID L. SHOFFNER
JERRY C. SIEG
KENNETH R. SORENSON
TIMOTHY D. WALLS
KEVIN B. WESTON
STANLEY E. WHITTEN
ROBERT E. WICHMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

SPENCER T. PRICE

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

JAMES E. O'NEIL III
KEITH M. ROXO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 5721:

To be lieutenant commander

JOSHUA C. ANDRES
CARL W. BARLOW III
LOWELL E. BRUHN
RALPH T. BUCKLES
DEREK A. BURNEY
ARON E. CALLIPO
DANA S. CANBY
KENDRA B. CARTER
DAVID A. DUFFIELD
STEPHEN M. EMERSON
CLINTON D. EMRICH
JACOB M. GERLACH
DANIEL W. GOODWIN
CHRISTOPHER A. GRILLO
RYAN M. GRUNDT
SAMUEL F. HARTLEY
JOHN J. HARTSOG
KYLE T. HAUBOLD
COLLIN R. HEDGES
DARRELL R. HEIDE
RICHARD S. HEIDEL
BRENT J. HOLLOWAY
ROBERT A. JOHNSON
CHARLES P. JONES
ALFRED L. KELLER, JR.
JEREMY D. LEAZER
WILLIAM C. LIVINGSTON
BENJAMIN B. LONG
FRANCISCO D. MARTINEZ
JOSHUA D. MEEK
THOMAS E. MILLER
JEFFERY A. MILOTA
JUSTIN A. MURTY
SHAUN A. POSEY
PETER J. REMILLARD
ALEX RINALDI
COSMAS SAMARITIS
JOSEPH W. A. SAMMUR
DANIEL C. SHEA
THOMAS J. SIMMONS
MATTHEW D. SPAKOWSKI
ERIK B. SUNDAY
STEPHEN D. SZACHTA, JR.
CHAD T. TELLA
MARK TEMPLAR
NATHANIEL B. VANDEVENTER

ROBERT W. VINSON
MARK F. WAITE
BRIAN D. WILSON
JOHN E. WOODSON
ALAN W. YOUNG
BETHANY R. ZMITROVICH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

CALVIN M. FOSTER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be lieutenant commander

TARA A. FEHER

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate October 28, 2015:

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SARAH ELIZABETH FEINBERG, OF WEST VIRGINIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION.

WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on October 28, 2015 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF ENRIQUE J. GWIN, TO BE COLONEL, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JUNE 16, 2015.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF A.L. BROWN HIGH SCHOOL WINNING THE ''BATTLE FOR THE BELL''

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the A.L. Brown High School Wonders football team for its victory over the Concord High School Spiders in the ''Battle for the Bell'' football game.

In the 85th meeting between these two rival football programs, A.L. Brown earned a hard-fought victory over Concord by a score of 26–15. The Wonders took an early lead in the first quarter with a 24-yard pass from quarterback Damon Johnson to wide receiver Dominique Washington, but Concord answered in the second quarter with a Keenan Black one-yard touchdown run to tie the game up at the half. The two teams traded touchdowns in the third quarter, but the Spiders had the lead going in to the fourth quarter after a successful two-point conversion. However, the Wonders would answer in the fourth quarter with two touchdowns to recapture ''The Bell'' and take it back to A.L. Brown High School, located in Kannapolis, North Carolina.

This is the first victory for A.L Brown over Concord in three seasons, with Concord holding the slight overall series edge at 42–39–4. In addition to being the 85th game played between these two schools, this game made history by being the first ever game in the state of North Carolina to be televised live, according to the Charlotte Observer. Having gone to the game myself, I can confirm this was a game worthy of the distinction. Both teams played extremely hard, and both fan bases should be proud of the effort and skill displayed by both teams.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in congratulating the A.L. High School football team for its victory over Concord High School in the ''Battle for the Bell'' football game.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARK TAKAI

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, October 27, 2015, I was absent from the House due to illness. Due to my absence, I am not recorded on any legislative measures for the day. I would like to reflect how I would have voted had I been present for legislative business.

Had I been present, I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call 570, Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 1090.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call 571, the Rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 1090.

I would have voted ''yea'' on Roll Call 572, Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 597.

I would have voted ''yea'' on Roll Call 573, the Rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 597.

I would have voted ''yea'' on Roll Call 574, the Lynch Amendment to H.R. 1090.

I would have voted ''no'' on Roll Call 575, final passage of H.R. 1090.

I would have voted ''yea'' on Roll Call 576, final passage of H.R. 597.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

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 $18,152,603,664,891.43. We've added $7,525,726,615,978 to our debt in 6 years. This is over $7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

TRIBUTE TO MAXINE BERMAN

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable person from my home state of Michigan, Maxine Berman, who is being inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame on October 29, 2015. Maxine and nine others will join pioneering women including civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks, former First Lady Betty Ford, the Queen of Soul Aretha Franklin, and the longtime dean of the White House press corps Helen Thomas, who have been previously inducted into the Women's Hall of Fame for their contributions to my home state and to our nation.

Maxine Berman served in the Michigan House of Representatives from 1983 to 1996, where she earned a reputation for her intelligence, her thoughtfulness about public policy, and for her candor. She was also known for her steadfast commitment to women's health and reproductive freedom, including authoring a bill to require accreditation for mammography facilities and successfully lobbying the federal government to establish national standards. Maxine was also outspoken about challenges she and other women experienced in the State Legislature. In 1994, near the end of her tenure in the Michigan House, she published a book about this experience—The Only Boobs in the House Are Men: A Veteran Woman Legislator Lifts the Lid on Politics Macho Style—which made waves then and is still cited today, more than twenty years later.

After a few years away from government, Rep. Berman joined the administration of Governor Jennifer Granholm, where she served as director of special projects. In this position, Maxine was a powerful public advocate for vital issues including women's health and reproductive freedom, affirmative action, and stem cell research, and she led the Granholm Administration's effort to encourage local governments to collaborate in providing services to their residents. Her leadership was recognized by Central Michigan University, who appointed Rep. Berman to be the Griffin Endowed Chair in American Government from 2009 to 2013. This prestigious position is named for former U.S. Senator Robert Griffin and his wife Marjorie, and has been held by notable political leaders from both political parties since its inception.

Her many accomplishments do not capture the influence that my dear friend, Maxine, has had throughout—and since—her years of public service. Maxine is always willing to lend an ear or a hand to talented people who want to serve, and Michigan has benefitted from the leadership of the countless women to whom Maxine has served as a mentor, confidante, policy advisor and coach. She remains committed to good public policy and grassroots activism.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly fitting that Maxine Berman will join other notable women of Michigan in the Women's Hall of Fame. I encourage my colleagues to join me in congratulating her, and in thanking her for her leadership and significant contributions to Michigan and to the nation.

IN HONOR OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF KANNAPOLIS' 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize First Baptist Church of Kannapolis for their 100-year anniversary.

Located in Kannapolis, North Carolina, First Baptist Church has been a staple of the community throughout their 100-year history. Under the stewardship of Rev. Dr. Claude Forehand II, First Baptist Church has been a beacon of hope in our community through service projects and events, and has provided the congregation with opportunities to develop as individuals through prayer, worship and educational workshops.

On Friday, September 25, 2015, First Baptist Church of Kannapolis officially celebrated their 100-year anniversary with an event filled with fellowship and worship. The event included remarks from special guest speaker

Rev. Dr. Haywood Gray, who serves as Executive Secretary of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

I would like to commend First Baptist Church of Kannapolis for their 100 years of service and dedication to our community, and I wish them well as they begin their journey towards the next 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in congratulating First Baptist Church of Kannapolis on the occasion of their 100-year anniversary.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF HAROLD ''LEFTY'' ENCARNACION

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to a devoted community leader, respected businessman, and loving father, husband, and dear friend, Harold ''Lefty'' Encarnacion. Sadly, Lefty, as he was affectionately known, passed away Tuesday, October 13, 2015. A candlelight vigil was held the very next evening with over 100 members of the community in attendance to share stories and give remembrance to Lefty and his service to the Columbus, Georgia community. A funeral service will be held on Wednesday, October 28, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at Ambassadors of Christ Fellowship in Columbus, Georgia.

Harold ''Lefty'' Encarnacion was born on May 10, 1953 in the Bronx, New York to Puerto Rican immigrants. He worked as a maintenance supervisor at Fort Hamilton in New York and ran a small nightclub. Looking for a safer and more peaceful place to raise their family, Harold and his wife, Millie, moved to Columbus, Georgia in 1983.

Upon arriving, Harold worked numerous jobs, including cab driving. Millie was a manager at a food market. After noticing a lack of resources for the Latino population of Columbus, Harold and his wife opened their own grocery store called Millie's International Market in Columbus, which sold a variety of ethnic foods and seasonings. The store quickly became a staple in Columbus, as well as a community center for the area's Hispanic and Caribbean populations.

Although Millie's was successful in bringing together the Latino community of Columbus, Lefty believed there was more to be done to unify and empower this segment of the population. He managed Columbus' only Hispanic radio station, UNIDOS 107.7 FM until it closed in 2014. But in 2013, after many years of planning, Lefty partnered with Columbus City Councilor, Mimi Woodsen, to launch the inaugural Tri-City Latino Festival.

The Tri-City Latino Festival is a tremendously successful celebration, and now a tradition, that brings together the Latino communities in the Chattahoochee Valley to celebrate this vibrant culture. It shows that this is an area that thrives on its diversity and unites members of the community to honor the struggle, sacrifice and success of their ancestors from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

Lefty was a beloved community leader and pioneer and his contributions to the city of Columbus will be remembered for years to come. More so, his kindness and emphatic resolve to push his community forward will live on through those who knew and loved him. On a personal note, I am proud to have called Lefty my friend of many years.

Mr. Speaker, my wife Vivian and I, along with the more than 700,000 residents of the Second Congressional District, salute Harold ''Lefty'' Encarnacion for his efforts to empower the Latino population of Columbus, Georgia and his everlasting commitment to his community. I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join us in extending our deepest condolences to Lefty's family and friends during this difficult time. We pray that they will be consoled and comforted by an abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks and months ahead.

CONNIE REELED IN THE GOLD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Connie O'Day from Pearland, Texas for winning this year's Islamorada Light Tackle Tournament.

The Islamorada Light Tackle Tournament is one of several fishing tournaments put on by the International Women's Fishing Association. Connie proved her skill in what used to be a male-dominated sport. During the tournament, all of the contestants braved the strong winds, but it was Connie's team that won the day. Her boat, guided by Captain Mark Gilman, beat the elements and the rest of the competition by catching the most fish. Now, I have to ask, when does Pearland get to go to the O'Day house for some fresh fish?

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Connie for winning the tournament and bringing the gold to Pearland.

RECOGNIZING DR. WILLIAM (BILL) T. STANLEY

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to recognize the life of Dr. William (Bill) T. Stanley. Born in Lebanon, Bill grew up in Kenya and moved to the United States with intentions of becoming an animal scientist.

Bill was in charge of some 29 million objects and specimens at the Field Museum in Chicago. Scientists and students would reach out to Bill for his resourcefulness in their respective fields of study. He helped many graduate students reach their potential with his assistance on their theses and dissertations. His knowledge and ability to explain specimens in detail motivated his audience to engage and learn.

Reaching his goals of becoming a mammalian researcher, Bill's character touched the lives of everyone he came in contact with. Bill was known not only for his research but also his ability to fill the room with his good spirits and incredible sense of humor. Bill will be missed by his family, friends and the mammalian research community to which he devoted his life.

I would like to thank Dr. William T. Stanley for his strong leadership and contributions to the city of Chicago. His legacy will live on and may he rest in peace.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHRIS WEST

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chris West of Concord, North Carolina, who passed away far too soon on August 22, 2015, after a four year fight with cancer. We send our prayers and sincerest condolences to his parents, Brian and Michelle West, the entire West family, his friends, and the Jay M. Robinson High School community.

Born on August 19, 1998, Chris dedicated his short life to serving others, even in the face of battling such a horrific disease. During his four year fight with Hodgkin's lymphoma, Chris has made national headlines for his selflessness and his desire to care for others. A prime example of Chris' selflessness is rather than celebrating a successful bone marrow transplant in a personal way, like many of us would, Chris performed 100 random acts of kindness for others in his community. During his struggle with cancer, Chris was never known to ask for anything; that is until his 17th birthday. The only thing Chris wanted for his birthday were birthday cards, and the community he gave so much to responded by sending him more than 10,000 cards.

In a recent People magazine feature about Chris' request for birthday cards, he was quoted as saying ''I like going to the mailbox. It's just an exciting feeling and it makes me feel special.'' I can say, without a shadow of a doubt, that Chris was a special individual, and I hope he knew that every day of his life. Our community will greatly miss his kind heart and indomitable spirit, and he will be remembered as a shining example of the best among us.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in commemorating the life of Chris West, who in his short life taught us that no matter what difficulty life may throw at us, we should always take time to serve others.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, on October 23, 2015, due to unforeseen circumstances, I was not present to vote on H.R. 3762, the Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act of 2015, introduced by Representative TOM PRICE. Had I been present, I would have voted NO on final passage of H.R. 3762, roll call No. 568.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, on October 27, 2015, the House considered H.R. 3819, the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2015. This act extends the Positive Train Control implementation deadline to December 31, 2018. The House passed H.R. 3819 by voice vote. Had this been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on H.R. 3819.

RECOGNIZING INDEPENDENT AUDIO DRAMA

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of independent audio drama to our nation's culture and history. For over one hundred years, the dramatic scripts, compelling music, and sound effects of audio drama have resonated with listeners across various ethnic, financial, and geographic divides.

During the Great Depression, radio drama adaptations of novels and plays achieved widespread popularity as a means of increasing morale through such difficult times. With the increase in televised and video entertainment came the waning interest in radio drama. However, in recent years, the growth of independent media production has revived audio drama within the U.S. Independent audio drama is now providing aspiring as well as seasoned artists with a unique and sophisticated platform to reach diverse audiences.

I am proud to rise in recognition of independent audio drama as it continues to expand, exhibit the work of our talented rising artists, and impact the lives of countless Americans.

CONGRATULATING DR. ROBERT KASE ON EARNING A GRAMMY NOMINATION

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Robert Kase, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Saint Francis in Joliet, Illinois, for earning a Grammy award nomination in the category of Outstanding Jazz Solo for the track entitled ''Dr. Doo Good.'' ''Dr. Doo Good'' is an original composition by Dr. Kase and is part of his recently released jazz quintet album titled As We Gather.

As We Gather was not only recorded at University of St. Francis's Digital Audio Recording Arts studio, it was engineered, mastered, and produced by University of Saint Francis faculty.

Dr. Kase has an impressive background as an educator, administrator, business leader, and performer. His musical career includes touring with Sonny and Cher and playing alongside Frank Sinatra, The Temptations, Natalie Cole, and other musical legends.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Robert Kase in earning a Grammy nomination.

NATIONAL WORK AND FAMILY MONTH

HON. ALBIO SIRES

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to discuss the importance of America's working families. October is National Work and Family month and an opportune time to discuss how Congress can better serve our working families. In almost three out of five married families with children, both parents work. Supporting initiatives like raising the minimum wage, ensuring equal pay for women, and allowing workers access to affordable childcare is vital to ensuring the success of our working families.

Raising the minimum wage is a critical step in closing the opportunity gap and building an economy that works for everyone. By raising the minimum wage, we can restore fairness for working men and women across the country. No hard working American should be forced to raise their family in poverty, but unfortunately the current minimum wage allows for just that. An increase in the minimum wage is not only the moral thing to do, but it would also provide a much-needed boost to our economy.

Equal pay issues affect all workers in this country trying to provide for their families. Women make up 47% of the workforce and bring home 44% of the family income, yet they earn 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. As women continue to make up a larger segment of our Nation's workforce, it is imperative that we ensure that pay disparity is related to job-performance instead of gender. Stronger protections and enforcement will lead to a more successful female workforce that is not bogged down by discrimination.

Ensuring access to childcare and early education for working families is important to their success. The lack of good, affordable preschool and childcare options have huge impacts on working families, with a significant disadvantage to low-income families. Childcare and early education options allow for parents to continue working and provide children with a strong foundation. Yet, many low-income working families are not able to afford childcare and have difficulties receiving assistance, even though they may be eligible. Providing greater access to childcare and preschool is a crucial step towards ensuring job retention among parents while offering a foundation for children.

Employing policies that ensure that all working families are afforded a fair chance to succeed should be something that Congress strives to achieve. I look forward to working with my colleagues to address these issues.

TRIBUTE TO GLEN AND SUSAN TRAVIS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Glen and Susan Travis of Thurman, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married on September 24, 1965.

Glen and Susan's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Vicki, Scott, and Kari, and their grandchildren, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Travis family that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this special couple on their 50th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

RECOGNIZING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TULLY HILL CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY TREATMENT CENTER

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 25th anniversary of the Tully Hill Chemical Dependency Center in Tully, New York. The Tully Hill Chemical Dependency Center opened in 1990 to provide quality detoxification and inpatient rehabilitation services to the Central New York community. Tully Hill began outpatient treatment services in 1996 and continues to provide chemical dependency treatment to individuals in need in the 24th District.

As a former federal prosecutor in Syracuse, NY, I saw the direct impact chemical dependency and addiction has on the safety, health, and success of our community. Chemical dependency centers, such as Tully Hill, are crucial to the reduction of chemical dependency throughout Central New York. Centers, such as Tully Hill, help Central New York individuals and families in their time of need to regain their health and lead positive lives through comprehensive, safe treatment.

I am proud to recognize the Tully Hill Chemical Dependency Center and congratulate the Center on the achievement of its 25th anniversary. On behalf of Central New York and the more than 17,000 patients and their families that Tully Hill has helped in their efforts to achieve and maintain sobriety, I want to thank the Tully Hill Chemical Dependency Center for their work in our community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House of Representatives voted on the Retail Investor Protection Act, which passed by a wide margin of 245–186. Allow me to make a clarification on my vote. I fully support this legislation and meant to vote 'yea' on final passage, not 'no'. Unfortunately, by the time I noticed the error, the vote had closed and I was unable to correct it. Voting 'no' was not my intention.

I am pleased the Retail Investor Protection Act passed the House with broad support. Like many of my constituents, and others across the country, I have serious concerns about the negative impacts that the Department of Labor's proposed 'fiduciary rule' will have on the retirement savings options available to employees. I believe that the Retail Investor Protection Act properly addresses these concerns and contributes to the financial security of millions of Americans.

On October 26, 2015, I joined my House colleagues on a letter to the Secretary of Labor that urged the Department to withdraw the proposed rule and commit to a process that avoids the arbitrariness, uncertainty, and inadequate analysis embodied in the proposed rule. I remain fully committed to these views and support the entirety of the Retail Investor Protection Act.

RECOGNIZING MR. STEPHEN LARCEN, UPON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to thank Dr. Stephen W. Larcen, President of the Hartford Healthcare Behavioral Health Network, for 25 years of devotion to improving the continuum of mental health services in Connecticut. With more than 40 years of experience in behavioral health and healthcare management, Steve has been an invaluable resource to Hartford Healthcare and the community at large. He has accompanied the organization through many periods of growth and change, including Hartford Healthcare's acquisition of Natchaug Hospital and their expansion to reach even more of Connecticut's residents by opening nine satellite hospitals throughout the state. Under his watch, the Behavioral Health Network expanded to offer more services than ever before, including in-home psychiatric services and a treatment program for adolescent girls involved in court proceedings.

During his career, Steve's work stretched all across eastern Connecticut, a very diverse population with many mental health needs. Steve demonstrated a remarkable sensitivity to this diversity, which as the Congressman for that region I admire greatly. In particular, Steve successfully spearheaded an effort to give Medicaid patients from Windham County opportunity to receive care for mental illness at Windham Hospital and Natchaug Hospital, rather than New Haven or Hartford. This was a very competitive national process that Steve successfully navigated.

A testament to his achievement and vision, Steve was appointed by the Governor to the Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council. He is a corporator of Lawrence & Memorial Hospital and serves on the East Lyme Board of Finance and received the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems' 2010 Grassroots Leadership Award for his work in elevating the importance of grassroots advocacy within the association. He has advocated tirelessly for increased coverage and funding for quality mental health services on a federal, state and local level. Adding to his many awards and recognitions, Steve received the 2015 American Hospital Association Connecticut Grassroots Champion Award.

Although Steve will be retiring at the end of this year, the effect of his decades of devotion to the mental health horizon in Connecticut will be felt for years to come. I ask my colleagues to please join me in wishing Dr. Stephen Larcen a restful and enjoyable retirement.

DIRECT SELLING

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be a founding co-chair of the Direct Selling Caucus, which was established in January and announced at a Direct Selling Association (DSA) event with participants and constituents from around the country.

As a full time student, direct selling provided me with the flexibility necessary to pay for college while in school. Running my own business was an extremely rewarding experience and served as great preparation for my career in public service. It is a vibrant sector of the economy that embraces entrepreneurship and helps people achieve their American dream.

More than 18 million Americans located in every state, Congressional district and community choose to become involved in direct selling. It contributes more than $34 billion to the U.S. economy annually. As economic uncertainty places more emphasis on needed flexibility that opportunities to work independently provide, direct selling will continue to grow and prosper.

Just as important to the continued success of direct selling are the safeguards that the industry, through the Direct Selling Association's leadership, put into place. They promote high standards of business ethics and consumer protection.

On October 29, 2015, hundreds of direct sellers from across the country will come to Washington, DC to emphasize the importance of direct selling to the economy and remind policymakers of the opportunity it provides to pursue meaningful independent work. I hereby request that October 29, 2015 be recognized by this House as Direct Selling Day.

HONORING THE HEROIC ACTIONS OF BRIAN BALLENTINE, TROOPER GARDNER, AND TROOPER JOHNS

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Brian C. Ballentine of Liverpool, New York and Troopers Michael L. Gardner and David A. Johns of the New York State Police. On September 5, 2015, Trooper Gardner and Trooper Johns, with the help of private civilian Mr. Ballentine heroically saved a 4-year old child.

On September 5, Trooper Gardner and Trooper Johns responded to an amber alert issued by the Vermont State Police while traveling on the New York State Thruway. As Trooper Gardner and Trooper Johns spotted a vehicle that matched the description of the vehicle in the amber alert they received a radio call advising that a private citizen, Mr. Ballentine, had called 911 to report that the van was in fact the suspected vehicle. With this confirmation Trooper Gardner and Trooper Johns were able to stop the vehicle and safely rescue the 4-year old child.

Trooper Michael L. Gardner is a 12-year veteran of the New York State Police. He has been stationed in Troops D and B and has been assigned to the New York State Thruway in Troop T since October of 2012. Trooper Gardner is currently stationed at State Police Syracuse in Dewitt, New York.

Trooper David A. Johns in an 8-year veteran of the New York State Police. He has been stationed in Troops B and D and has been assigned to the New York State Thruway in Troop T since October of 2009. He is currently stationed at State Police Syracuse in Dewitt, New York.

Mr. Brian C. Ballentine of Liverpool, New York has lived in the Central New York community his entire life and I am proud to recognize his exemplary actions in our community.

I am honored to recognize Trooper Gardner, Trooper Johns, and Mr. Ballentine for their heroic actions on September 5, 2015. The 4-year old girl is now out of harm's way thanks to these three brave men. Trooper Gardner's and Trooper Johns's efforts in this situation exemplify the finest traditions of the New York State Police and I wish them continued success in their careers.

HONORING APOSTLE RICHARD D. HENTON

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Apostle Richard D. Henton who made his heavenly transition on October 22, 2015. Apostle Henton was called into the ministry in 1948 and rose to become one of the most prolific speakers of our day.

Apostle Henton served in ministry for 66 years, 50 of those as pastor of the 5,000 member Monument of Faith Church located in my district. Apostle Henton also founded the

R. D. Henton Breakthrough Ministries, a weekly program that aired on television, radio and online throughout the world and allowed Apostle Henton to touch the lives of millions across the globe.

This tremendous ministry permitted the world to know Apostle Henton's charismatic and captivating voice that brought breakthroughs for his members and the world at-large and led many to know him not only as a faithful pastor but as their "TV Evangelist".

Mr. Speaker, Apostle Henton was a learned man who held three Doctorate of Divinity degrees and was the recipient of numerous certificates of merit. Apostle Henton was not only honored by our colleagues here in the House, but also with letters from presidents, and having been given keys to many cities.

Of his numerous awards, he was especially proud of two very special awards he was given in his hometown of Chicago, Illinois: The N'Digo Foundation's N'Faith Award and the Luminary Senior Citizen Hall of Faith Award presented by former Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Of his many accomplishments, Mr. Speaker, we must not forget that, ultimately, Apostle Henton was a family man and the father of four children who worked faithfully with him in the ministry.

Mr. Speaker, Apostle Henton will truly be missed by us all but I will always remember what an amazing pastor and friend he was. My thoughts and prayers are extended to his family, church family and many friends. No one can prepare for a loss; it comes like a swift wind, but, I take solace in the fact that he is now resting in the arms of our Lord.

IN MEMORY OF KAY ARNOLD

HON. DAVID A. TROTT

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. TROTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of the Honorable Kay Arnold of Plymouth, Michigan for her extensive public service and unwavering commitment to the Plymouth community.

Kay had an unparalleled résumé, serving on the Plymouth Board of Trustees since 1992 and the planning commission since 1996. Her accomplishments in these roles include leading projects to improve the Ann Arbor Road corridor, Miller Park, and bridges in the township park. Colleagues often praise her independence in completing projects and willingness to always listen to residents' concerns. Plymouth Township would not be the same without Kay's work, and her influence will not be quickly forgotten. Kay also devoted time to volunteer work and was active with United Way, the Plymouth Community Arts Council, the Schoolcraft College Foundation, and the Plymouth Community Chamber of Commerce.

The Plymouth community will greatly miss Kay and her tireless efforts to improve her township. I express my condolences to her family, and to all who had the privilege of knowing her.

CONGRATULATING YANIS COFFEE ZONE FOR THEIR DESIGNATION AS THE 2015 SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR BY THE JEFFERSON CITY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Yanis Coffee Zone with being named 2015 Small Business of the Year by the Jefferson City Area Chamber of Commerce.

Yanis Coffee Zone, known for its Rocket Fuel house brew, has been serving customers since October 7, 2003. For the past twelve years, Yanis Coffee Zone has expanded from fifty customers to an average of four hundred patrons a day.

This award is based on a business' overall success accounting for innovation and creativity, growth, and involvement in community-oriented projects. Yanis Coffee Zone's owners and employees have shown dedication and commitment to the hard work that contributed to receiving this award. It is evident that Yanis Coffee Zone represents excellence within the business community and in serving their patrons.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Yanis Coffee Zone on receiving this outstanding award.

TRIBUTE TO DEBBIE WILLIS

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, this December, the Army Corps of Engineers will see an exceptional employee retire after 32 years of exemplary service to our citizens, communities, agencies and military men and women that the Corps serves.

Debbie Willis lived in Idaho from 1999 to 2009, serving as the Project Manager in charge of the Walla Walla District's Boise office. During that time, she represented the "First and Best" door to the Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District. Debbie always provided a "can-do" attitude and worked tirelessly with her peers, local citizens, state and federal agencies, and private non-profits, to unlock remarkable solutions to difficult challenges that our communities faced in Idaho. In the words of one Idaho Mayor, she was our "Superwoman." These sentiments are shared by the countless individuals Debbie worked alongside to solve problems during her time at the Corps.

Debbie specialized with issues related to environmental improvements in urban and suburban flood-prone areas. She also worked with local communities to address the critical issues of water and wastewater infrastructure management and actively sought to involve community stakeholders in flood risk reduction and environmental habitat improvements along Idaho's valuable waterways and riparian areas.

In 2005 and 2006 she earned the honor of being selected from the ranks of the Corps of Engineers to serve as a Congressional Fellow and as a member of the staff for the House Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee. On May 24, 2006, Chairman of the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee Dave Hobson recognized Debbie on the floor of the House of Representatives for her invaluable assistance in crafting the Energy and Water appropriations bill for fiscal year 2007.

Throughout her years of service to our country, Debbie served the Corps of Engineers in Georgia, South Carolina, Washington and North Carolina. She holds a Civil Engineering degree from North Carolina State University and has utilized her education and experience to help plan, engineer, and manage the construction of many large and complex military and civil works projects throughout the country and most recently for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg.

As a senior Corps project manager, she provided environmental restoration support to the Department of Energy at two of the Nation's largest nuclear facilities, the Hanford and Savannah River sites. Debbie also found time to use her expertise in a volunteer capacity by helping local communities in the southern U.S. assess and recover from damages caused by natural disasters. She traveled across the country and overseas, teaching management fundamentals and skills to Corps' employees and continues to be a mentor to many within the agency.

Debbie's last assignment has been as a Senior Project Manager for the Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers. Within that capacity, she has demonstrated extraordinary leadership and dedication supporting our service men and women at Fort Bragg. Over the past several years she has successfully managed the design and construction for both the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and the Security Operations Training Facility (SOTF) at that base.

Debbie's hard work and dedication to duty is a proud reflection of the Corp of Engineers and her support for our nation's military. Her performance awards serve as a testament to more than three decades of exceptional service and selfless dedication to this country. I congratulate Debbie Willis on her retirement and wish her and her husband Brayton well in future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL J. HEID

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished Urbandale, Iowa resident and industry leader, Michael J. Heid. Mike is a widely respected mortgage industry executive with Wells Fargo, whose mortgage business is headquartered in West Des Moines, Iowa. Mike recently announced his retirement after an impactful and successful 30-year banking career that culminated in spending the last eleven years as President of Wells Fargo Home Lending.

In addition to managing 40,000 employees across the country, Mike has been a leader in

shaping housing policy while helping the industry navigate the unprecedented challenges of the past decade. He devoted a great deal of his time to bringing together divergent views on housing finance reform and has spent hours acting as a valuable subject matter resource to policymakers on Capitol Hill along with multiple Administrations.

A frequent visitor to the nation's capital, Mike has been referred to as the ''go-to source'' in Washington for housing policy matters. He has testified before Congressional committees on numerous occasions and is known for his thoughtful approach and his in-depth and unbiased knowledge of the housing industry.

A native of Wisconsin, Mike joined Wells Fargo in 1988. During his twenty-seven years at the company, he has led the servicing function and acted as CFO before becoming president of the mortgage business. Wells Fargo was the nation's largest home lender during his tenure. But Mike hasn't always been perched at the top of the mortgage industry. He started at a small mortgage bank whose cash flow was so poor, that he determined he would have to sell the furniture to stay afloat. Mike draws his strength from his family; his wife, his son and his daughter. He now has extra incentive to spend more time with his family, having two granddaughters living in the Des Moines area. Full-time grandparent sounded awfully inviting to Mike.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Mike's dedication to the greater Des Moines community, and his steadfast commitment to bringing the American dream of home ownership to so many. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Mike and wishing him and his wife Diane nothing but the best as they plan this new chapter in their lives.

HONORING ANNE SAMSON

HON. MARK MEADOWS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the legacy of Anne Samson. Anne was a selfless philanthropist who dedicated her life to serving her family and community.

A daughter of Hungarian Holocaust survivors, Anne was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. Anne's love for Israel and the Jewish people illuminated much of her work. Anne and her husband, Lee, actively served within the Jewish community and volunteered in Israel following the Six-Day War.

Anne's philanthropy and selflessness touched many families, synagogues, and organizations. In her memory, the Samson family has helped establish the Anne Samson Memorial Fund which will provide assistance to the Jerusalem Journey summer program, in which hundreds of public school students have their very first Israel experience.

Anne's life demonstrated that it is often the quiet leader who is the most impactful. She led by example, motivated by her strong convictions and Jewish faith. Beloved by her family and community, Anne's legacy lives on in her children and grandchildren who carry on her graciousness, hospitality and dedication to service. It is my honor to commemorate Anne Samson's memory today.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ELLEN ROSENTHAL FOR HER OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO CONNER PRAIRIE

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ellen Rosenthal on the occasion of her retirement. For 10 years Ellen has served as President and CEO of Conner Prairie Interactive History Park, a beloved destination of Indiana's Fifth Congressional District located in Fishers, Indiana. Conner Prairie flourished under Ellen's leadership, and Hoosiers are eternally grateful for her contributions.

Ellen has a long history developing museums and exhibits. She planned the opening of historic houses at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, Minnesota and at the Frick Art and Historical Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She also served as curatorial director for the American History Workshop in Brooklyn, New York, where she managed projects for the National Museum of American History, South Street Seaport Museum, and National Endowment for the Humanities. In 1999, Ellen began her career with Conner Prairie as Vice President of Internal Affairs, assumed a leadership role in 2003 when she was promoted to Executive Director, and in 2005 became President and CEO. Since then, Ellen played an integral role in transforming Conner Prairie from a traditional living history museum into the independent, immersive, and interactive history park it is today.

At the beginning stages of Conner Prairie's transformation, Ellen redefined the museum's mission to ''inspire curiosity and foster learning about Indiana's past by providing engaging, individualized and unique experiences.'' She has a passion for creating and developing museums that offer active engagement and learning that transcends generations and strategic, data-driven decision making. A wonderful example of Ellen's vision put into action is the opening of the outdoor experience ''Civil War Journey: Raid on Indiana,'' which used historical actors, sounds, and sets to place visitors in the middle of a southern Indiana Civil War battle. Her unique approach to focusing on experiential learning and guest immersion as well as her incomparable ability to build support and raise funds for new exhibits has resulted in more than a 240 percent increase in annual attendance. More than 360,000 guests visit Conner Prairie's historic grounds and indoor experiences annually.

During her tenure as President and CEO, Conner Prairie has received a number of honors and awards. Most notably, Conner Prairie was awarded the nation's highest honor for museums—the National Medal from the Institute for Museum Library Sciences. Conner Prairie also was selected as one of six museums nationwide to be featured as a magnetic museum, which is defined as ''high-performance organizations that deliver tangible cultural and civic value and achieve superior business results.'' Under her leadership, Conner Prairie became a Smithsonian affiliate, the only museum in Indiana to hold such a distinction. Additionally, Ellen led the effort that secured a $2.3 million National Science Foundation grant in 2012 that empowers Conner Prairie to lead four American institutions in the integration of informal science experiments at historical sites and museums across the country.

Ellen's personal commitment to the community and success as a leader has not gone unnoticed. Governor Mike Pence is bestowing upon Ellen a Sagamore of the Wabash, one of the most prestigious honors in Indiana. She also received the Commitment to Creativity Trailblazer award from University High School (2014), the Torchbearer award from the Indiana Commission for Women (2013), was cited for Excellence in Innovation by the Indiana Innovation Awards (2012), named a Woman of Influence by the Indianapolis Business Journal (2008), and named a ''Distinguished Hoosier'' by Governor Mitch Daniels (2006).

As a personal friend and admirer of Ellen for over a decade, it is truly a privilege to honor her today for her many accomplishments. On behalf of the grateful constituents of Indiana's Fifth Congressional District, I congratulate Ellen on the occasion of her retirement. We congratulate her on her remarkable career and extend a huge thank you for all of the wonderful contributions she has made to Conner Prairie and the Hoosier community. I wish the very best to Ellen, her husband, Dr. Ted Logan, and her three sons, Daniel, Sam, and Paul as she enjoys a well-deserved retirement.

COMMEMORATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF OAK GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH, LITTLETON, NORTH CAROLINA

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Oak Grove Baptist Church located in my congressional district in Halifax County, North Carolina in the town of Littleton. The Church was founded in 1865 by Reverend Lovely Brown, Sr. and several faith leaders who devoted themselves to spreading the word of God.

One hundred fifty years ago, Reverend Brown and his small congregation of parishioners gathered to worship under a ''bush arbor.'' Through steadfast faith and an unwavering dedication to its mission of faith and service, Oak Grove has grown from those humble beginnings to become a pillar of hope for its congregation and a cornerstone of the Littleton community.

On April 2, 1966, the church was destroyed by a devastating fire. Pastor J.W. Wiley rallied the congregation and the community to rebuild. The following year, Oak Grove held its first service in the newly built ''Heritage Sanctuary.''

Oak Grove is pastored by Rev. Dr. Charles McCollum, Sr. where the church continues to prosper under his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Rev. Dr. McCollum, the parishioners of Oak Grove Baptist Church, and the residents of Littleton on this historic milestone.

TRIBUTE TO NICOLE ALDRICH

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the heroic actions of Nicole Aldrich, MSN, RN of Altoona, Iowa. On Sept. 18, 2015, VA Central Iowa Health Care System hosted a POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony. The ceremony was running accordingly until mid-way through when the keynote speaker collapsed at the lectern.

Without hesitation, Nicole charged forward from the back of the room, announced that she was a nurse, and took charge of the situation. She immediately began CPR and then shouted for an AED. At this point her 79 year old patient was unconscious, but she dutifully continued CPR until the AED was used and the POW keynote speaker began to breathe on his own again. Nicole turned the patient onto his side and reassured him the EMT was on its way. Once in the ER, her quick actions were repeatedly praised and she was credited for saving the man's life.

Nicole is an eight year veteran employee of VA Central Iowa. She received her BSN degree from Grand View University and her Masters of Nursing in Leadership and Management from Walden University. She currently serves as the Nurse Manager for the Specialty Clinics/Diabetes Education/Oncology unit at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor to represent leaders like Nicole in the United States Congress. I applaud her lifesaving efforts and I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in commending Nicole, thanking her for her efforts, and wishing her nothing but the best.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, October 29, 2015 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

NOVEMBER 3

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the future of warfare.

SD–G50

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Deborah R. Malac, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda, and Lisa J. Peterson, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Swaziland, both of the Department of State.

SD–419

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation

To hold hearings to examine Putin's invasion of Ukraine and the propaganda in Europe.

SD–419

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology and the Law

To hold hearings to examine data brokers, focusing on whether consumers' information is secure.

SD–226

NOVEMBER 4

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine how gagging honest reviews harms consumers and the economy.

SR–253

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the value of education choices for low-income families, focusing on reauthorizing the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program.

SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Stuart F. Delery, of the District of Columbia, to be Associate Attorney General, Department of Justice.

SD–226

10:30 a.m.

Committee on the Budget

To hold hearings to examine reforming the Federal budget process, focusing on a biennial approach to better budgeting.

SD–608

2 p.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights and Federal Courts

To hold hearings to examine the American victims of Iranian and Palestinian terrorism.

SH–216

2:30 p.m.

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine ensuring success for the Social Security Disability Insurance program and its beneficiaries.

SD–106

NOVEMBER 5

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management

To hold hearings to examine agency progress in retrospective review of existing regulations.

SD–342

10 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine wildfire, focusing on stakeholder perspectives on budgetary impacts and threats to natural resources on Federal, state, and private lands.

SR–328A

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7551–S7600

Measures Introduced: Five bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2212–2216, and S. Res. 299–300. **Page S7594**

Measures Passed:

Surface Transportation Extension Act: Senate passed H.R. 3819, to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund. **Page S7574**

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 293, supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, commending domestic violence victim advocates, domestic violence victim service providers, crisis hotline staff, and first responders serving victims of domestic violence for their compassionate support of victims of domestic violence, and expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should continue to support efforts to end domestic violence and hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S7598**

National Bison Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 300, designating November 7, 2015, as National Bison Day. **Pages S7598–99**

House Messages:

Bipartisan Budget Act—Agreement: Senate began consideration of the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations, taking action on the following motions and amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S7585–86**

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill. **Page S7585**

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell Amendment No. 2750, to change the enactment date. **Page S7585**

McConnell Amendment No. 2751 (to Amendment No. 2750), of a perfecting nature. **Page S7585**

McConnell motion to refer the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, to the Committee on Finance, with instructions, McConnell Amendment No. 2752, to change the enactment date. **Page S7586**

McConnell Amendment No. 2753 (to (the instructions) Amendment No. 2752), of a perfecting nature. **Page S7586**

McConnell Amendment No. 2754 (to Amendment No. 2753), of a perfecting nature. **Page S7586**

A motion was entered to close further debate on McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Friday, October 30, 2015. **Page S7585**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to the bill at approximately 10 a.m., on Thursday, October 29, 2015. **Page S7599**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the continuation of the national emergency relative to the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan as declared in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. (PM–30) **Page S7590**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

Sarah Elizabeth Feinberg, of West Virginia, to be Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration. **Page S7600**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

1 Army nomination in the rank of general.
1 Coast Guard nomination in the rank of admiral.
1 Navy nomination in the rank of admiral.
Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, and Navy. **Pages S7599–S7600**

Nomination Withdrawn: Senate received notification of withdrawal of the following nomination:
A routine list in the Air Force. **Page S7600**

Messages from the House: **Page S7590**

Measures Referred: **Page S7590**

Measures Read the First Time: **Pages S7590, S7599**

Executive Communications: **Pages S7590–93**

Petitions and Memorials: **Pages S7593–94**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S7594–95**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S7595–97**

Additional Statements: **Pages S7589–90**

Amendments Submitted: **Page S7598**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S7598**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S7598**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:41 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, October 29, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S7599.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine unmanned aircraft systems and the steps being taken to successfully integrate this technology into our National Airspace System, after receiving testimony from Michael Huerta, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation; Marty Rogers, Alliance for System Safety of UAS through Research Excellence, Fairbanks, Alaska, on behalf of the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Unmanned Aircraft Systems program; and Tim Canoll, Air Line Pilots Association, International, Washington, D.C.

DOE NATIONAL LABORATORIES

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development concluded a hearing to examine realizing the potential of the Department of Energy national laboratories, after receiving testimony from TJ Glauthier, and Jared Cohon, both a Co-Chair, Commission to Review the Effectiveness of The National Energy Laboratories, Department of Energy.

RURAL BANKING

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection concluded a hearing to examine the state of rural banking, focusing on challenges and consequences, including S. 1491, to provide sensible relief to community financial institutions, to protect consumers, after receiving testimony from Terry Foster, Mifflin County Savings Bank, Lewistown, on behalf of the Pennsylvania Association of Community Bankers; Roger Porch, First National Bank, Philip, South Dakota; Carrie Wood, Timberland Federal Credit Union, DuBois, Pennsylvania; and Sarah Edelman, Center for American Progress, Washington, D.C.

NOMINATION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Jessica Rosenworcel, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senator Thune, testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

U.S. ROLE AND STRATEGY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the United States role and strategy in the Middle East, after receiving testimony from Anne W. Patterson, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, and General John R. Allen, USMC (Ret.), Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, both of the Department of State.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Peter William Bodde, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to Libya, Marc Jonathan Sievers, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, Elisabeth I. Millard, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Tajikistan, and Kenneth Damian Ward, of Virginia, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as United States Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, all of the Department of State, and John Morton, of Massachusetts, to be Executive Vice President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

BIODEFENSE

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the state of our nation's biodefense, after receiving testimony from former Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, New York, New York, and Thomas J. Ridge, former Secretary of Homeland Security, Washington, D.C., both a Co-Chair, Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense.

RETIREMENT PLAN OPTIONS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security concluded a hearing to examine retirement plan options for small businesses, after receiving testimony from Scott Anderson, Static Peak, LLC, Jackson, Wyoming, on behalf of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Lance Schoening, The Principal Financial Group, Des Moines, Iowa, on behalf of the American Benefits Council; John J. Kalamarides, Prudential Retirement, Hartford, Connecticut; and David Certner, AARP, Washington, D.C.

VA MENTAL HEALTH

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Department of Veterans Affairs mental health, focusing on ensuring access to care and action needed to improve access policies and wait-time data, after receiving testimony from Debra A. Draper, Director, Health Care, Government Accountability Office; Harold Kudler, Chief Consultant for Mental Health Services, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Roscoe G. Butler, The American Legion, and Jacqueline Maffucci, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, both of Washington, D.C.; Nicholas Karnaze, Stubble and 'Stache, Arlington, Virginia; and Dean S. Maiers, Seymour, Connecticut.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 15 public bills, H.R. 3842–3856; and 4 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 88; and H. Res. 500–502 were introduced. **Pages H7331–32**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H7332–33**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 2643, to direct the Attorney General to provide State officials with access to criminal history information with respect to certain financial service providers required to undergo State criminal background checks, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–316, Part 1); and

H.R. 2510, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify and make permanent bonus depreciation, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–317, Part 1). **Page H7331**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Palazzo to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H7251**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:05 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H7264**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Bishop Mar Awa Royel, Assyrian Church of the East, Salida, California. **Page H7264**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by voice vote. **Pages H7264, H7312**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:58 p.m. and reconvened at 2:53 p.m. **Page H7271**

Trade Act of 2015: The House agreed to the Rogers (KY) motion to concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations, with the amendment printed in part A of H. Rept. 114–315, modified by the amendment printed in part B of H. Rept. 114–315, by a yea-and-nay vote of 266 yeas to 167 nays, Roll No. 579. **Pages H7268–H7312**

H. Res. 495, the rule providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1314) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 392 ayes to 37 noes, Roll No. 578, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 325 yeas to 103 nays, Roll No. 577. **Pages H7271–72**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, October 29. **Page H7313**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

State Licensing Efficiency Act of 2015: H.R. 2643, to direct the Attorney General to provide

State officials with access to criminal history information with respect to certain financial service providers required to undergo State criminal background checks; **Pages H7313–14**

DHS Social Media Improvement Act of 2015: Concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 623, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to establish a social media working group; and **Pages H7314–16**

Northern Border Security Review Act: H.R. 455, amended, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct a northern border threat analysis. **Pages H7316–19**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress that the national emergency declared with respect to Sudan is to continue in effect beyond November 3, 2015—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–71). **Pages H7312–13**

Senate Messages: Messages received from the Senate today appears on page H7261.

Senate Referral: S. 754 was held at the desk. **Page H7261**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H7271–72, H7272, H7312. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Committee Meetings

BIG DATA AND AGRICULTURE: INNOVATION AND IMPLICATIONS

Committee on Agriculture: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Big Data and Agriculture: Innovation and Implications''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM—A UNITY OF EFFORT

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing entitled ''Transition Assistance Program—A Unity of Effort''. Testimony was heard from Brigadier General James Iacocca, USA, Adjutant General, U.S. Army; Susan Kelly, Director, Transition to Veterans Program Office, Department of Defense; Horace Larry, Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel, U.S. Air Force; Major General Burke Whitman, Director, Marine and Family Programs, U.S. Marine Corps; Thomas Yavorski, Executive Director, 21st Century Sailor Office, U.S. Navy; and public witnesses.

ASSESSING DOD'S ASSURED ACCESS TO MICRO-ELECTRONICS IN SUPPORT OF U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation held a hearing entitled ''Assessing DOD's Assured Access to Micro-Electronics in Support of U.S. National Security Requirements''. Testimony was heard from Marie Mak, Director, Acquisition and Sourcing Management Team, Government Accountability Office; Kristen Baldwin, Principal Deputy, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Engineering, Department of Defense; André Gudger, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manufacturing and Industrial Base Policy, Department of Defense; and Brett Hamilton, Division Chief Engineer for Trusted Microelectronics, Naval Surface Warfare Center—Crane.

RESTORING THE TRUST FOR AMERICA'S MOST VULNERABLE

Committee on the Budget: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Restoring the Trust for America's Most Vulnerable''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 3459, the ''Protecting Local Business Opportunity Act''. H.R. 3459 was ordered reported, as amended.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE DEPLOYMENT

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Breaking Down Barriers to Broadband Infrastructure Deployment''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

UPDATE ON LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL ISSUES; MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy held a hearing entitled ''Update on Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Issues''; and a markup on S. 611, the ''Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act''. Testimony was heard from Mark Whitney, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, Department of Energy; Michael Weber, Deputy Executive Director of Operations for Materials, Waste, Research, State, and

Compliance Programs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission; Leigh Ing, Executive Director, Texas Low Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Commission; and public witnesses. S. 611 was ordered reported, without amendment.

TERROR INMATES: COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN PRISON AND BEYOND

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence held a hearing entitled "Terror Inmates: Countering Violent Extremism in Prison and Beyond". Testimony was heard from Jerome P. Bjelopera, Specialist in Organized Crime and Terrorism, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; Tony C. Parker, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Correction, State of Tennessee; and a public witness.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on a discussion draft of the "Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Modernization Act". Testimony was heard from Leslie Weldon, Deputy Chief, National Forest System, U.S. Forest Service; Olivia Ferriter, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs held a hearing on H.R. 3764, the "Tribal Recognition Act of 2015". Testimony was heard from Kevin Washburn, Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans held a hearing on H.R. 1219, the "Arbuckle Project Maintenance Complex and District Office Conveyance Act of 2015"; H.R. 1296, to amend the San Luis Rey Indian Water Rights Settlement Act to clarify certain settlement terms, and for other purposes; and H.R. 3062, the "Assuring Private Property Rights Over Vast Access to Land (APPROVAL) Act". Testimony was heard from Senator Boozman; Representative Womack; Letty Belin, Counselor to the Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior; Steven Jolly, District Manager, Arbuckle Master Conservancy District; and public witnesses.

RADICALIZATION: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE RISE OF TERRORISM

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on National Security held a hearing entitled "Radicalization: Social Media and the Rise of Terrorism". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

A REVIEW OF THE NETWORKING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (NITRD) PROGRAM

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Research and Technology held a hearing entitled "A Review of the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) Program". Testimony was heard from Keith Marzullo, Director, National Coordination Office, Networking and Information Technology Research and Development Program (NITRD); and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine alternative approaches to defense strategy and force structure, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine welfare and poverty in America, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Thomas A. Shannon, Jr., of Virginia, to be an Under Secretary of State (Political Affairs), and Laura S. H. Holgate, of Virginia, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the rank of Ambassador, and to be Representative of the United States of America to the Vienna Office of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, 10 a.m., SD–419.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and the Swiss Confederation for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Washington on October 2, 1996, signed on September 23, 2009, at Washington, as corrected by an exchange of notes effected November 16, 2010 and a related agreement effected by an exchange of notes on September 23, 2009 (Treaty Doc. 112–01), protocol Amending the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, signed on May 20, 2009, at Luxembourg (the "proposed Protocol") and a related agreement effected by the exchange of notes also signed on May 20, 2009 (Treaty Doc. 111–08), convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Hungary

for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed on February 4, 2010, at Budapest (the ''proposed Convention'') and a related agreement effected by an exchange of notes on February 4, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 111–07), the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Chile for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, signed in Washington on February 4, 2010, with a Protocol signed the same day, as corrected by exchanges of notes effected February 25, 2011, and February 10 and 21, 2012, and a related agreement effected by exchange of notes (the ''related Agreement'') on February 4, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 112–08), the Protocol Amending the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, done at Paris on May 27, 2010 (the ''proposed Protocol''), which was signed by the United States on May 27, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 112–05), the Protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and its Protocol, signed at Madrid on February 22, 1990 (Treaty Doc. 113–04), the Convention between the United States of America and the Republic of Poland for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed on February 13, 2013, at Warsaw (Treaty Doc. 113–05), and the Protocol Amending the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Japan for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income and a related agreement entered into by an exchange of notes (together the ''proposed Protocol''), both signed on January 24, 2013, at Washington, together with correcting notes exchanged March 9 and March 29, 2013 (Treaty Doc. 114–01), 2:15 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine mental health and substance use disorders in America, focusing on priorities, challenges, and opportunities, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider the nominations of Brian R. Martinotti, and Julien Xavier Neals, both to be a United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, Robert F. Rossiter, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska, and Edward L. Stanton III, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, October 29

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 1314, Bipartisan Budget Act.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, October 29

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Election of the 54th Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

Congressional Record

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