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No. 106

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 21, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN J. DUNCAN, Jr. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, 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. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was World Refugee Day, a day set aside by the United Nations to reflect upon those in crisis and dedicate ourselves to helping those we can help.

To mark this solemn occasion, today, the Judiciary Committee House Republicans will vote to slash refugee resettlement numbers, cut back aid to those fleeing violence and persecution for their religious or political beliefs, and

make it harder for children fleeing violence, especially those from Central America, from receiving asylum from the richest, most powerful Nation in the world.

Tell me, how does that make America great again, Mr. Speaker?

According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, there are more than 65 million people—a record number today—who have been forcibly displaced from their homes. More than 21 million are refugees. Eighty-six percent of the world's refugees are now finding refuge in the developing world, with only 14 percent finding refuge in developed countries like the U.S. or European nations.

Worldwide, more than half of all refugees are children. So when anti-immigrant leaders, websites, and TV networks paint those fleeing the Middle East, Africa, and Asia as hardened jihadists, or those fleeing Central America as gangbangers and drug dealers, remember, most of them are just kids—little kids. That is what we are talking about, fleeing their country for their lives.

Mr. Speaker, America has, throughout our history, been a beacon of hope to refugees fleeing religious attacks, facing government intolerance and persecution, ethnic strife, or unsustainable poverty.

Beginning in the 1840s, when the potato crop disappeared because of a blight in Ireland, the Irish people were left starving. Over 8 million people in Ireland, 3 to 4 million of them faced starvation. About 1 million died mostly of starvation and disease.

Another 2 million came where? To America.

According to a recent article in The Irish Times: "Panic had set in by the winter of 1846/47. People risked winter voyages across the Atlantic on unsanitary, unsafe 'coffin ships.'"

The article continues: "People were placed in quarantine stations, or held onboard ships docked at ports."

"Refugees experienced violent and racist reactions. Liverpool, Glasgow" . . . "Montreal, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia sought unsuccessfully to restrict entry" of the Irish.

A lot of this sounds familiar to me today when we discuss the Muslim ban that the courts have blocked and which motivated thousands of Americans to go to airports to demand that the United States honor its visas and honor its commitment to refugees, or as the House Judiciary Committee meets today, to punish children for fleeing for their lives.

Roughly 32 million Americans trace their roots to Ireland. That is about 10 percent of the U.S. population. And let's be clear, the British rulers over Ireland were not sending what they consider their best people. They were poor, they were uneducated, and U.S. politicians at the time said that they were sending rapists, murderers, and drunks, even as some, they assumed, were good people.

They were from a religion that threatened the United States. They were Catholics who were as foreign to American Protestants, in some regards, as Muslims are today.

But who can imagine America without the Irish today?

You look down the list of generals, Presidents, Members of Congress, and every aspect of American society today, and we can all say, to some degree, we are Irish.

As House Republicans vote today to pass bills to keep out the wretched refuse of your teeming shores, as we pass laws to pull up the drawbridge and put a big "Do Not Enter" sign on the Statue of Liberty, I hope my Republican colleagues who can trace roots back to someone who came across the water and risked everything and bet their lives on the United States, I hope all of us will reflect on those ancestors as we deliberate laws and how we would have kept so many of them out.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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His Holiness Pope Francis, who we all remember just spoke steps away from where I am at right now, reminded us to always follow the Golden Rule in all our deliberations. Pope Francis said just this past Sunday that the nations of the world should continue to welcome refugees; and each of us, as individuals, can learn a lot by meeting with, speaking with, and breaking bread with refugees.

His Holiness said: “. . . personal meetings with refugees can dissolve fears and distorted ideologies and become paths for growth in humanity.”

Mr. Speaker, I hope my Republican colleagues have been listening, as we have a Speaker who is both Catholic and Irish, but I fear they will not.

OPIOID AND HEROIN ADDICTION

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, prescription opioids and heroin addiction are ravaging our Nation, causing heartache and pain for millions of American families, and destroying our communities. This is no secret.

In my own home State of Illinois, opioids contribute to nearly 1,200 overdose deaths in 2016. Heroin played a role in those deaths of another 1,000 people, many of whom started with prescription drugs.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, more people die from opioid drug overdose than from homicide and motor vehicle accidents.

These aren't just numbers or statistics. The people battling addiction are moms and dads and neighbors and students. Addiction doesn't care about your race, your gender, your income, your political leanings. It is an issue that affects everyone because it impacts every community and every person we love.

Congress took an important step last year in passing the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. This bipartisan legislation, which was signed into law, created a coordinated and balanced strategy for communities to tackle issues regarding prescription and opioid abuse in their communities.

Just last month, Congress voted to fund programs designed to prevent and treat opioid and heroin use. But the real leaders of this effort will be citizens in our local community. Many local police departments now offer drug drop boxes. Parents, especially, are on the front line of this issue and are responsible to educate our children about the dangers of prescription medication.

If you see someone struggling with addiction, please encourage them to speak to their local drug and alcohol commissioner.

Completely ending addiction nationwide may not be possible, but together we can save lives and begin to put hope back in our communities.

DO THE RIGHT THING

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, when someone keeps something secret, it is often because it is embarrassing or negative or damaging or unsupportable.

Mr. Speaker, over in the Senate, Leader MCCONNELL and some of these Republican Senators are doing just that: crafting a healthcare repeal bill in secret because they know what it contains would deeply embarrass anyone who supports it openly.

They know it is going to be a hard sell to convince even their own Republican colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to get behind a bill that even President Trump called mean. That was the House American Health Care Act to which he was referring. He called it mean for the harm it does to Americans.

They know it is going to be difficult in the Senate to convince Senators to support a bill that raises healthcare costs for working families and kicks millions of Americans off their coverage, including those who are covered by their employers; a bill that makes millions of individuals with preexisting conditions uninsurable and reinstates annual and lifetime limits; a bill that imposes an age tax on those between ages 50 and 64, increasing premium costs by as much as 800 percent; a bill that forces States to cut benefits and kick millions of people off Medicaid, whether it is next year, in 3 years, or in 7 years, those times that are to try to get by elections so that perhaps people will not be held accountable for voting for such draconian legislation.

Mr. Speaker, such a bill ought to be very embarrassing indeed, which is why Senator MCCONNELL, I believe, and his allies don't want anyone to see it until they are asked to vote on it.

We have a similar problem, of course, in the House.

Whatever happened to transparency, to openness, to reading the bills, to posting it for all to see in advance? Where are all those people who wanted everybody to read the bills and see the bills? Where are they today in demanding that bills be fully and thoroughly vetted, read, heard, and voted on?

It is no wonder even Republican Senators who haven't seen the bill are getting angry with their leader and those drafting it in secrecy.

Republican Senator RON JOHNSON said last week, Mr. Speaker: “I want to know exactly what is going to be in the Senate bill. I don't know it yet.” And then he concluded: “It is not a good process.”

And Senator MARCO RUBIO said: “The Senate is not a place where you can just cook up something behind closed doors and rush it for a vote.”

But, Mr. Speaker, what we hear is exactly what is happening, cooking it up in secret and rushing it for a vote.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they are not the only ones who want to know what is in

this bill. Millions of Americans are deeply worried about its contents.

Last week, I sat down with two courageous Americans who shared their personal healthcare stories with me. I want to thank them for doing so, and I want to share their stories today. Their names are Ola Ojewumi and Megan Foley.

Ola lives with a preexisting condition. As a young child, she received a heart and kidney transplant. She is also a cancer survivor. She is a young woman. She told me about how the Affordable Care Act saved her life. She was able to access affordable coverage because of the ban on denying coverage to those with preexisting conditions. Ola also told me how frightened she is that these protections could be taken away for her under the Senate's secret TrumpCare bill.

If it is enacted, Ola and others with preexisting conditions may not be able to access the coverage needed to keep them alive and healthy, or they may simply not be able to afford it.

When I spoke with Megan Foley, she shared her courageous story of struggling with mental illness and addiction. She told me how she overcame her addiction. Despite her recovery, before the Affordable Care Act came into effect, she was denied coverage again and again because her addiction was considered a preexisting condition. Those were difficult months, cutting back on expenses and accruing debt just to pay for her medication until the Affordable Care Act kicked in and allowed for Megan to obtain coverage.

□ 1015

But she made it, and now, the law protects Megan and millions and millions of others like her struggling with addiction who were given a second chance.

At a time when this country is plagued, Mr. Speaker, with an unprecedented opioid addiction crisis, the Republican repeal bill is an insult to courageous Americans for whom recovery is a lifelong process and access to care is essential. They, and so many Americans, are now living with uncertainty and fear for their future.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my interviews with Ola and Megan on social media, and I encourage all Members of this House to sit down with their constituents and listen to their stories and hear about their concerns.

Americans deserve to know what is in the Senate's secret TrumpCare bill and how it would impact them and their loved ones. Americans deserve to know. Senators who represent those Americans need to know, and they have not seen it yet, yet there is some discussion that they may have to consider the bill as early as next week. Senators and Members of this House deserve to know.

End the secrecy. Pull back the curtain. Let us see what is in that bill that these Senators think is so embarrassing that it must be hidden from us all.

I will remind Republicans, both in the House and in the Senate, and the Republican President in the White House, that their party's control of our government is complete, and they will be held responsible for whatever happens to our healthcare system on their watch.

CBO tells us that 23 to 24 million people, as a result of the House bill, would lose their insurance; the preexisting conditions would be put at risk; and over \$800 billion would be cut from Medicare and Medicaid.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of us to listen to Americans, to hear how beneficial the Affordable Care Act has been. I hope they will listen to Ola. I hope they will listen to Megan and all those who are concerned for the future and not huddle in a secret backroom making decisions that will negatively impact millions and millions and millions of our fellow citizens.

Do the right thing. Do it for Ola. Do it for Megan. Do it for all of our citizens.

UNAUTHORIZED SPYING ON AMERICANS AND 702 REAUTHORIZATION

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, once again, Americans' privacy is under attack, this time by the spying eyes of our own U.S. Government. And people across the U.S. are wondering what is this section 702 issue.

Well, Mr. Speaker, section 702 is a provision of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. We call it FISA. It permits government to monitor the communications of suspected foreign agents, including terrorists, and to find out, in that communication, if that foreign agent wants to hurt us.

However, sometimes these individuals under surveillance communicate with American citizens, and this surveillance allows the conversations of ordinary citizens to be recorded, and that includes text messages, emails, and the conversation itself.

But what many Americans don't realize is these secret communications are not destroyed by the intelligence agencies. They are kept and kept forever. In fact, the government stores this data, and often goes back into that data and searches it, without a warrant, in violation of the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution, for information on American citizens.

What we do with the foreign agents, hey, it is okay. But government then takes that information they have seized on Americans and then goes back and looks through it without a real warrant. That includes the IRS, the FBI. And they get the NSA to give those conversations on Americans, unrelated to the conversation with the terrorist, and they use that information to maybe prosecute them for some unrelated offense years later. Usually,

this subsequent search is for reasons wholly unrelated to the original collection.

Essentially, the government uses this procedure to spy on Americans who may have done no wrong, and the search is not based on probable cause, not based on a real warrant from a real judge.

The National Security Agency is designed to keep a close watch on terrorists and foreign agents, not Americans. NSA surveillance is supposed to keep us safe from those foreign agents who wish to do us harm.

But before the Federal Government decides to invade the privacy of Americans, they should obtain a real warrant. Under current law, FISA courts, those are secret courts that operate in secret and issue secret warrants—I have got a whole issue problem with secret courts in this country anyway, based upon the history of the Star Chamber in England.

However, those secret courts allow government to search and collect that data, and the FISA courts almost always grant the requested warrant on the foreign agent.

Our Founders feared that a government powerful enough to commit unreasonable searches and seizures on Americans should be closely watched. That is why they crafted the Fourth Amendment, to protect our right to privacy. As a former judge, I heard issues on the Fourth Amendment every day. And let me read it again, especially for those folks in NSA.

“The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, effects”—that would be conversations—“against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated; and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”

That applies to the NSA. If they can get a warrant from a real judge based on probable cause to search that data on Americans, go for it. But they can't. They just seize the information and peruse it later and get information on Americans and then prosecute them.

This kind of reverse targeting on Americans is not what Congress intended under 702 of the FISA authorization bill. Technology may change, but our Constitution never changes, and spying on Americans just has to stop.

Americans should not be forced to sacrifice liberty and constitutional rights for security, especially for overreaching Federal bureaucrats.

Regardless of the result surrounding the alleged incidental capture of campaign officials' conversations, the American public must realize the implications of this little provision called 702. Reverse targeting of Americans without a search warrant based on the Fourth Amendment has got to stop. Can't do it.

But right now Congress has the ability to reform overreaching law as part

of the larger FISA reauthorization process that will take place this year.

Opponents of 702, the concept that you can't spy on Americans, are wishing for what they call a pure reauthorization of FISA, without any new safeguards. They argue that these mass invasions of privacy will make us safer.

Those who preach we must sacrifice the Constitution on the altar of false security are wrong. We must never abdicate our rights because the national spy agency, NSA, demands it.

In fact, even a FISA court judge found that NSA analysts had been collecting searches that violate the procedures under FISA “with much greater frequency than had previously been disclosed to the court”. The FISA court called this a very serious Fourth Amendment issue.

Well, no kidding. It is a violation of current law, but the NSA violates current law and spies on Americans.

After these findings were released and NSA was caught, the NSA pledged to stop the warrantless surveillance of Americans. But, Mr. Speaker, their promise is useless.

FISA and 702 must be fixed by inserting the specific language that prohibits reverse targeting on Americans without a valid search warrant. If government wants information on Americans, get a warrant.

Without clear and specific language, our intelligence agencies will continue these unconstitutional searches, even if they promise to end their procedure.

But we can't trust the NSA not to spy on Americans, so Congress needs to have an open debate on the spying of Americans and not reauthorize the FISA procedure unless we make sure that the American right of privacy is protected. Congressional action must be taken on this issue.

It is time to end spying on Americans. If you want to spy on an American, get a real warrant from the Fourth Amendment. Continue that surveillance of foreign nationals. That is a different issue. But you can't do both. You must protect the American right of privacy.

Congress has that obligation because that is our job to enforce the Fourth Amendment right of privacy.

And that is just the way it is.

CONTINUE PRAYING FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE SHOOTING IN ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

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

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, before I start, I just want to ask America to continue praying for our good friend, STEVE SCALISE, who was injured last week in the horrific targeting of Republican members of the congressional baseball team over in Alexandria. I had been there moments before the shooting started.

I want to ask America to continue praying for those in law enforcement

that, every day, run toward the danger when we are fleeing the danger, to protect us, our families, and our property; two brave Capitol Hill police officers who helped stop an active assassin last week, Crystal Griner and David Bailey, wounded in the act of fulfilling their role; two congressional staffers, Matt Mika and Zack Barth, injured on that baseball field, just participating in America's pastime, the game of baseball, a charity game to raise money for inner city children.

It is tough. It is tough on Members of Congress. It is tough on our families and our staffs who are all questioning their security.

I just ask America to take a deep breath before you utter a word or write a Facebook post or send an email, make a phone call. Remember, Scripture says to take the log out of your own eye before you try to take the fleck out of someone else's, words that we should remember.

THE LONGEST DAY

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the reason I came down to the well today is today is June 21. It is the summer solstice, the first day of summer. It is the longest day of the year, from sunup to sundown. And the Alzheimer's Association has picked today, the longest day of the year, to recognize and raise awareness toward and for Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, the month of June.

I am wearing a purple tie today, and many are wearing purple in support of those impacted by Alzheimer's disease; more than five million people currently living with Alzheimer's disease in America, and it is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. These numbers are remarkable.

We passed recently, in the last Congress, the 21st Century Cures Act. It is now a law, and I pray that it will serve as a jump start on moving medical research and development closer to finding a cure for such a mysterious disease.

You know, this is a deeply personal issue with me. April of 2015, I lost my father to Alzheimer's. And as my family was going through struggling with my father's Alzheimer's and dementia, we found out that, in many cases, it is the caregivers who pass before the Alzheimer's patient because of the toll that Alzheimer's takes on the caregiver, hence, the name "the longest day." For many of those caregivers, dealing with an Alzheimer's loved one is a long day, a lot of repetition, a lot of forgetfulness. We see our Alzheimer's loved ones doing things, saying things that they never would have done or said in their right mind.

Alzheimer's is something that needs to be on our minds today, the longest day. The Alzheimer's Association needs to be supported. Alzheimer's research needs to be supported by Congress, by government at all levels so we can find a cure for this and end Alzheimer's.

Today, the longest day, I ask America to join me in thinking about those

Alzheimer's patients, those families and caregivers, the Alzheimer's Association, and let's end Alzheimer's. We can do that. We can do that, America. The longest day.

□ 1030

EXPAND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week's shooting in Alexandria left our friend and colleague Mr. STEVE SCALISE badly wounded. Two brave U.S. Capitol Police officers and a young congressional staffer were also injured. We continue to pray for their quick and their full recovery.

I know that other Members, other staff members, their friends, their families have been affected by this, too. Too often, after a shooting or some other traumatic event, we focus on those injuries that are physical, the ones we can see, while forgetting about those injuries we can't see.

I continue to practice psychology in the Navy at Walter Reed Hospital in Bethesda, where I work with veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, and traumatic brain injury. These veterans come back from witnessing traumatic events while in combat, and some have come close to committing suicide. These brave men and women fight every day against the horrific images that replay in their minds. The wound is invisible; the damage is often long term. They can and do recover with help.

Since last week, I have thought about other groups who witness trauma in their homes and in their neighborhoods. These are the forgotten ones: young kids in Chicago who have become desensitized to the sound of a gunshot or the sounds of police sirens throughout the night, victims of sexual assault on college campuses and elsewhere, children who witness domestic abuse, and youth in foster care.

Most youth in foster care have traumatic family histories and life experiences, including their removal from the birth family, resulting in an increased risk for mental health disorders. A recent study published in Pediatrics found that children placed in foster care were three to five times more likely to suffer from mental health problems such as depression and attention deficit disorder than children who were never in foster care.

Another study revealed that PTSD was diagnosed 60 percent of the time in sexually abused children and 42 percent of the time in physically abused children. A staggering 18 percent of foster children have never been the primary victim of abuse, yet they still suffer from PTSD probably because they witnessed domestic or community violence.

The American Academy of Pediatrics Healthy Foster Care America initiative identifies mental and behavioral health as the "greatest unmet health need for children and teens in foster care." And since most of these kids are not receiving mental health treatment, their problems carry on into adulthood.

Adults who formerly were placed in foster care, known as foster care alumni, have disproportionately high rates of emotional and behavioral disorders; 21.5 percent of foster care alumni suffer from PTSD compared to just 4.5 percent of the general population.

Each year more than 20,000 young people age out of foster care without being ready to live independently. Discharged from care without social support or assistance, these youth are at higher risk for drug use and mental illness, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress, and others. Too often they experience higher rates of unemployment, homelessness, and dependence on public assistance programs.

A lack of a comprehensive mental health screening of all children entering out-of-home care and the need for more thorough identification of youth with emotional and behavioral disorders contribute to these dismal statistics. As well, insufficient youth access to high-quality mental health services highlights our Nation's shortage of providers, in that half the counties in America have no psychologists, no psychiatrists, no clinical social workers, or workers who are licensed as substance abuse providers.

Given the evidence from studies indicating that children in care have significant developmental, behavioral, and emotional problems, quality services for these children are an essential societal investment.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that the House yesterday took up legislation to address this important issue. H.R. 2847, the Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, expands and improves the John H. Chafee Independence Program, which helps current and former foster care youth achieve self-sufficiency. Specifically, the bill will widen the age range of foster youth who can receive assistance under the program.

I am proud to support this bill and will continue to shed light on those who suffer from trauma, who, as a consequence, suffer from either PTSD, depression, or other emotional sequelae. These bills we voted on will continue to give our foster children both help and hope.

PROMOTING TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, this weekend, while meeting with Kansas farmers during wheat harvest, I visited with a family where one spouse farmed full time and the other worked from

home, an increasingly common arrangement, especially in the tough farm economy we have today. But at the moment, a reliable broadband connection is out of their reach.

To keep and grow these jobs in our rural areas, we must make smart infrastructure investments that connect our rural residents: investments that don't duplicate what private enterprise has done, and investments that will carry far into the future.

For most businesses, including agribusiness, broadband services allow companies to access the global electronic marketplace. For consumers, broadband allows people to connect via social media, to download apps and stream videos, and to manage everything from a bank account to a college application. Beyond just access to resources, building out broadband in rural areas increases the quality of life for most citizens and promotes job creation and economic development.

As you think about infrastructure and technology, Mr. Speaker, and as the Small Business Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy and Trade hears testimony on the topic this week, I encourage my colleagues to keep in mind the value of our small rural telecom providers that connect rural Americans with the rest of the world and make every effort to connect rural consumers and businesses with a wide array of services.

Mr. Speaker, the House will take up the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. Education supported by career and technical education programs are vital to addressing gaps in workers' skills and employee needs. Employers across the Nation and in my district in Kansas continue to stress the need for well-trained workers, often citing the lack of workers as a key constraint for their own growth.

Luckily, there are great educational programs in my district. I am so proud that many community colleges and technical colleges offer 2-year degrees in technical education that lead to high-paying, steady jobs across Kansas.

About 30 FFA students recently visited me on Capitol Hill. They talked about their desire to enter a wide array of careers and trades. Their pride in the work they are pursuing is contagious. H.R. 2353 seeks to align CTE programs and in-demand industries, while allowing local programs more flexibility to address the needs of local labor markets.

The bill further highlights the importance of employability skills to student access. Career and technical education is foundationally important to economic growth and innovation. These are the jobs that sustain our economy. We must always keep this curriculum at the top of our minds as we look to preparing our students for success and our economy for stability.

I look forward to voting in favor of H.R. 2353 and ask my colleagues to do the same.

CONGRATULATIONS TO PENNSBURY HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TEAM ON WINNING STATE TITLE

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Pennsbury High School baseball team on winning their first State title on June 16, 2017.

After withstanding a rain delay of nearly 3½ hours, the Pennsbury Falcons triumphed over District 3 Dallastown in the PIAA Class 6A final at Penn State University. Thanks to Nick Price's single in the bottom of the seventh, the Falcons avoided extra innings and emerged on top, winning the game 1-0.

Pennsbury ended the season on 13 straight wins. Their pitching staff gave up one run in the playoffs, and zero runs in the last 30 innings. Billy Bethel was 4-0 with 0 earned runs in 27 innings in the district and State playoffs.

Mr. Speaker, it was Michael Jordan who said: "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships." The Pennsbury Falcons are something special, led by 13 seniors and Head Coach Joe Pesci. They should be extremely proud—not only for their accomplishments on the field, but also the pride that they brought to their families, to their school, and to the entire Eighth Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the individual names of the PIAA 6A Championship Pennsbury High School Falcon baseball team.

R.J. Huth, Jake Martell, Christian Buchler, Gary Minnes, Vaughn Ward, Alan Wolf, Josh Tesarck, Max Crawn, Bryan Nagy, Justin Ward, Ryan McCarty, Josh Arruda, Alec Wilson, Nick Price, Tommy Erickson, Shane Ostrowsky, Nate Derry, Ben Spadea, Justin Massiello, Kyle Dear, Dave Murphy, Billy Bethel, Tyrone Hodges Jr, Alex Ritter.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, these young men have shown us what success can look like on the baseball field, and I am confident that they will succeed in all of their future endeavors, continuing to make all of us in Bucks County proud.

HONORING THE LIFE OF WILLIAM CHAD MULDER

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

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to a friend and an American hero.

Chief Special Warfare Operator William Chad Mulder was a Navy SEAL and a highly decorated combat veteran receiving, among other honors, three Bronze Stars with Valor. He was a brother; he was a husband; he was a father; and he was a friend. William Chad Mulder, or "Bill," as his friends knew him, concluded his mission here on this Earth June 9, 2017.

If anybody was ever born for battle, it was Bill Mulder. He seemed to come hardwired with a soldier's spirit. All who knew him felt safer on account of his service to our country. Bill was the ultimate warrior.

Those of us who grew up with Bill in my hometown of Plainview, Texas, also knew him as the epitome of a Plainview Bulldog. He was tenderhearted, but he was tough. He was as caring as he was courageous, and he was as fun-loving as he was fearless.

To his wife, Sydney: Thank you for loving Bill so well.

To his children: His tender heart and his warrior spirit will live on through each of you.

We are praying for all of you, and on behalf of Plainview High School, the class of 1989, and all of us who were fortunate enough to call Bill our friend, we are proud of you, Bill. You served with distinction and honor.

Thank you for dedicating your life to keeping us safe. We will miss you, buddy.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Rabbi Hershel Lutch, MEOR Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we pray this day for wisdom, humility, courage, and Your beneficence.

We pray that You endow the distinguished Members of this House with the wisdom to develop legislation that advances the noble aims of our Nation and the honorable needs of her citizens.

Lord, we pray that You grant us humility to know that we are Your subjects and it is Your children for whom we toil.

We pray for steadfast courage to champion justice with fortitude and to battle tyranny with vigor.

O Lord, we pray this day that Your blessings of safety, success, and serenity rest on each Member, staff, and security officer of this House, and we pray that we might make continued room for Your presence in our hearts and in the soul of our great Nation.

Gracious God, we thank You today and every day for the profound gift that these United States represent in our lives. Both for those here at home and for people around the world, America stands as a beacon of hope and leadership in times of challenge and conflict.

May God bless this House of Representatives and may God bless the United States of America.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas 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 RABBI HERSHEL LUTCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my friend, Rabbi Hershel Lutch, and to thank him for reading the opening prayer here on the House floor today.

Rabbi Lutch has devoted his life to working for the Jewish community in the United States and around the globe.

I met Rabbi Lutch on a trip to Israel that he and his organization, Aish HaTorah, helped to coordinate. That special trip showed me firsthand how our ally in Israel fights to survive and thrive every day.

In addition to his work for Aish HaTorah, Rabbi Lutch is the CEO of the MEOR Foundation, an organization that strives to inspire Jewish students on college campuses to learn more about their history and heritage.

In his personal life, Rabbi Lutch is a husband and a father and a son. He is an asset to his community and our country, and I am pleased we could hear from him on the floor today.

Thank you, Rabbi, for blessing us here today and for your continued dedication to the Jewish people and to people of all faiths. It is an honor to know you.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

HONORING ELSIE FIGUEROA JOHNSON

(Mr. HOLDING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Elsie Johnson, who passed away last week at her Raleigh home.

Elsie was born in Puerto Rico to Gilbert and Maria Figueroa, and it was there during World War II that she met her husband, Carl Johnson, a North Carolinian and a U.S. Navy sailor stationed at Roosevelt Roads Naval Base.

Elsie and Carl lived the American Dream. Together, they started a small business, a motor shop, which grew into a franchise automobile dealership in New Bern, North Carolina, and, under the leadership of their son, David, now spans dealerships from Maryland to Florida. David learned from his parents the value of hard work and excellent customer service.

Elsie was a woman of incredible faith in God. She was strong, wise, and honest. Mr. Speaker, she made a difference and she leaves a legacy.

May God bless her family.

NATIONAL ASKING SAVES KIDS DAY

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, today, June 21, is National Asking Saves Kids Day, or ASK Day.

Every 6 days in our country, a child under the age of 15 dies from an accidental gunshot. Each year, more than 600 children sustain nonfatal injuries from an unintentional gunshot, and 80 percent of all unintentional firearm deaths of children under the age of 15 occur in a home. This is a national crisis, and we need to stop it.

Since 2000, the ASK Campaign has encouraged parents to ask before their child visits another home whether there is an unlocked gun in the house.

Today is the first day of summer, the season when kids spend more time at a friend's house, so later today I will be introducing a resolution to officially designate June 21 as National ASK Day, to promote children's health and gun safety.

This is not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. This is an issue important to every family all across our country. Let's get the job done and do something that will save the lives of children all across our country. Just ask.

NATIONAL POLLINATOR WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Pollinator Week, and it is a time when we encourage the protection of pollinator species, such as honeybees, native bees, birds, bats, and butterflies as essential partners of farmers and ranchers in producing food.

These pollinators are vital to keeping items like fruits, nuts, and vegetables in our diets.

As vice chairman of the House Agriculture Committee and chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee, I know that healthy pollinator populations are critical to the continued economic well-being of rural America and our U.S. economy as a whole.

It is important to recognize how critical it is to protect the health of pollinators and celebrate the significance that they play in our everyday lives.

The number of honeybee hives has declined from 6 million in the 1940s to about 2.5 million today. We need to increase those habitats.

American farmers have no better friends than the honeybee. More than one-third of U.S. crops require pollination.

As someone who has a beehive in his backyard, I fully support efforts to raise awareness and keep our pollinators buzzing for generations to come.

SENATE REPUBLICANS ARE CRAFTING THEIR HEALTHCARE BILL IN SECRET

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, Senate Republicans are continuing to craft their healthcare bill, TrumpCare, in complete secrecy, behind closed doors, no hearings, no bill text, no transparency whatsoever, and they expect to bring this bill to the floor next week.

The bill is secret, but it is pretty clear why they are keeping this legislation secret: because it is a lousy piece of legislation and the American people reject it because it takes away healthcare from 23 million Americans. For those who are fortunate enough to have healthcare, they will pay more for worse care. You will pay an age tax if you are an older American just to have access to healthcare.

Even President Donald Trump says this healthcare bill is mean. And let's just face the obvious. If Donald Trump says something is mean, you have got a real problem.

This legislation should go through the process of open debate and dialogue, not be crafted in secret because it is such a bad piece of legislation that the people offering it are embarrassed for the folks in America to know what it says. We have to shut this down.

HONORING SAILORS LOST AT SEA

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the USS *Fitzgerald* collided with a cargo vessel in the Sea of Japan on Saturday, resulting in the loss of life of seven patriotic sailors. Each of the deceased sailors was dedicated in the service to their Nation and exemplified the U.S. Navy's motto, "Not for self but for country."

As the grateful father of an orthopedic surgeon currently serving in the United States Navy, the sailors and their families are in my thoughts and prayers.

May we never forget these sailors: Shingo Douglass, 25, of California; Noe Hernandez, 26, of Texas; Ngoc Huynh, 25, of Connecticut; Xavier Martin, 24, of Maryland; Gary Rehm, Jr., 37, of Ohio; Dakota Rigsby, 19, of Virginia; Carlos Sibayan, 23, of California.

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

Our sympathy to the family of former State Representative Skipper Perry of Aiken, South Carolina, Aiken Chamber of Commerce "Man of the Year."

DO NOT REPEAL THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in the last month, Republican Senators have worked in secrecy on a bill that will repeal the Affordable Care Act. Now they are preparing to vote on that bill next week without any public hearings, no debates, no open forums. Instead, the Senate Republican majority have failed to be transparent with their constituents and the American people. No one knows what is in the bill.

Based on the last CBO score, we know that TrumpCare will lead to 23 million more Americans uninsured and gut protections for Americans with preexisting conditions and force hard-working Americans to pay higher costs for less care.

Mr. Speaker, in the words of President Trump, this bill is a mean bill. Even our former Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, has said to slow down.

Why must this bill be so secretive? Because our colleagues across the aisle know that the more light that is shed on their true intentions, the more people will realize this is not a healthcare bill at all, but a massive tax cut for the wealthiest Americans, and it will be paid for by our elderly and our poorest constituents.

Mr. Speaker, that bill is a bad bill.

REMOTE AREA MEDICAL

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, this morning I met, once again, with representatives from Remote Area Medical, its founder and president, Stan Brock, and its leaders, Jeff Eastman and Anabel Evora.

Remote Area Medical, also known as RAM, is an organization that helps medical professionals volunteer their services to our Nation's neediest.

Over its 32 years, RAM has provided free healthcare to almost 1 million peo-

ple over the course of 862 weekend events so far. Their largest clinic was in Los Angeles, where over 7,000 people showed up to receive free dental care, eyeglasses, women's health services, and other free medical services.

Unfortunately, only 12 States currently allow RAM to host these free clinics with volunteer medical professionals from all over the country. That is why I introduced H.R. 860, the HEALTHIER Act, so that people nationwide can have access to free healthcare clinics like RAM's.

RAM is willing to provide these free healthcare services to several million more people across the Nation if only we will allow them to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Stan, Anabel, Jeff, and all the others who work with RAM for their great work, and I urge my colleagues to help to support my bill, the HEALTHIER Act, to help many more people receive free medical care.

HOW TRUMP CARE WILL AFFECT AMERICANS

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

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I worked in healthcare for a decade. I have seen up close how healthcare impacts families. That is why I began a short video series that we call "Hear from the Heartland". In this, I listen to families about how TrumpCare would affect them.

I have spoken most recently with a woman named Anastasia. She has a little boy named Gryphon. They are from a town called Elizabeth, Illinois, just a small town.

Gryphon was born with cerebral palsy, and because of TrumpCare, Gryphon's family might not have anywhere to turn for affordable coverage and would be at risk of reaching their lifetime limits on their insurance.

Anastasia said it best when she said that her son's preexisting condition was simply being born.

Whether it is at a grocery store or small business, I hear it: people talking about their grave concerns about TrumpCare and what it would do to them.

I want us to work together on healthcare and make sure that we focus on lowering the costs for American families, but, instead, take a look at this. TrumpCare would raise costs, it would rip health insurance away from 23 million Americans, and it is so bad that, in the Senate, they are hiding their bill away. That is not what we were elected to do.

I want to work with my colleagues to improve the healthcare that we deliver to American families.

□ 1215

HONORING THE LIFE OF RICHARD UNDERWOOD

(Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to ad-

dress the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Richard Underwood, a veteran, a member of our Nation's Greatest Generation, an educator, and this is his 90th birthday.

Richard was born in Korea to his Presbyterian missionary parents and was a natural native speaker of the Korean language. After the attacks on Pearl Harbor, he was repatriated from Japanese-held Korea and attended high school in Brooklyn, New York, before enlisting in the U.S. Army and joining the Office of Strategic Services. In World War II, he served behind Soviet Russian lines in Korea and the liberation and division of Korea.

After his service in World War II, he returned to the United States, only to reenlist in the Army following North Korea's invasion of South Korea. As an interpreter in the Korean war, Richard and as his brother helped interpret peace talks at the end of the war.

After this military career, Richard returned to Korea in 1957 to head the America Korea Foundation; and in 1962, he joined the Korean mission of the Presbyterian Church and was assigned to the Seoul Foreign School as its principal and, later, headmaster.

Richard currently lives in Urbana, Illinois, with his wife of 65 years, Carol.

Richard, happy birthday, and thank you for your years of selfless service and sacrifice to this Nation.

SENATE VOTE ON HEALTHCARE

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

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, Republicans say they want a healthcare system that cuts costs and covers more Americans, yet this bill does no such thing.

Right now, Senate Republicans are having a backdoor meeting about this bill. I may be new to Congress, but I have been around politics long enough to know that you don't hide something that you are proud of.

Right now, they are keeping a bill that would impact the lives of millions a secret. They refuse to let those same millions of people weigh in on the process.

What do we have to lose? In this equation, we have a lot to lose: 23 million Americans stand to lose their healthcare. I will say that again: 23 million stand to lose their healthcare. They are veterans, seniors, students, children, young and old. We all have a lot to lose.

I have said it before; I will say it again. There is a big difference between campaigning and governing. It is time to govern.

Philadelphians deserve a healthcare bill that guarantees quality, affordable care. Now is the time to resist. Together we will speak up and speak out to make our voices heard loud and clear. Philadelphians have not forgotten healthcare. We know we have a lot to lose.

The President talks about putting the country first, but this healthcare bill does no such thing. American people deserve better. Together we will fight back and build stronger neighbors block by block.

ALZHEIMER'S & BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

(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, I rise today to recognize the month of June as Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month and to highlight the need for continued investment, innovation, research, and lifesaving cures for diseases like Alzheimer's that affect every family and every neighborhood in America.

Right now, more than 5 million Americans are living with this terrible disease, with someone new developing symptoms every 66 seconds. Studies have shown that number could rise as high as 16 million people by 2020.

This year, the cost of treating Alzheimer's and other dementias will cost Americans nearly \$260 billion. By 2050, estimates are that those costs will rise to more than \$1.1 trillion. To put that in perspective, as a nation, we are only spending slightly more than \$30 billion, total, in researching cures for not only Alzheimer's, but cancer, heart disease, Parkinson's, diabetes—literally, all other diseases combined.

So this month serves not only to raise awareness about Alzheimer's, but also for us to renew our commitment to research. Mr. Speaker, we must find a cure for the millions of Americans struggling with Alzheimer's, and it is up to us to provide the resources to do it.

STATEHOOD FOR PUERTO RICO

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

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, 10 days ago, Puerto Rico held a vote on its future political status. Although the ballot was not preapproved by the U.S. Department of Justice as envisioned by a 2014 Federal law, the ballot was fair. It included Puerto Rico's three valid options: statehood, nationhood, and the current territory status. Each option was accurately described.

In our democracy, only those who cast ballots are counted, and those who voted in Puerto Rico overwhelmingly chose statehood. It is now up to Puerto Rico's elected officials, especially its Governor and Delegate in Congress, to determine how best to move forward. They can count on my full support.

As I see it, in the wake of this vote, the question is not whether but, rather, when Puerto Rico will become a State. After 119 years, it is well past time for the U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico to have the same rights and responsibilities as their fellow citizens living in Florida and in other States.

Puerto Rico has made countless contributions to this Nation for generations. It has earned its own star on the American flag.

CONGRATULATING CARLY CLAUCHERTY

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Carly Claucherty for being named a Presidential Scholar in Career and Technical Education.

Carly recently graduated from Springport High School and was nominated for her outstanding work in their CTE agriscience program. She is one of just 20 students from around the country to receive this distinguished award.

In high school, Carly was active in Springport's Future Farmers of America chapter, served as president of the National Honor Society, and was involved in student council. This fall, Carly will be attending Michigan State University, where she tentatively plans to study crop and soil sciences.

Carly's selection as a CTE Presidential Scholar puts her in an elite group, but I suspect it is just a starting point for many more exceptional things to come.

Mr. Speaker, career and technical education provides valuable hands-on experience, and this week we will be voting for strengthening these important programs to help more students find their sweet spot, just like Carly did.

HONORING NAVY SEAMAN BOBBY TEMPLE

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor U.S. Navy Seaman Bobby Temple, a 19-year-old who died during the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. He was one of 400 sailors who lost their lives aboard the USS *Oklahoma* and whose remains were buried in a mass grave.

In 2015, the Navy started a project to identify each of the remains and bring closure to the families after 75 years. Bobby's bravery was honored during a memorial service in O'Fallon, Illinois, last week before his remains were laid to rest in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii.

As a veteran myself, it is with heavy heart that I honor Bobby's heroic service and pray God's blessing for his peaceful rest.

REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL IS A DISASTER

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, we hear the Senate is finally releasing a bill, a bill that would, sadly, take away healthcare from millions of Americans. Apparently, this bill will go straight to the Senate floor without a hearing, without a markup, without the opportunity for any public input.

This Republican healthcare bill is a disaster. It removes guarantees of coverage that the Affordable Care Act created, allowing States to determine health insurance options and discriminate against people with preexisting conditions.

Under the Republican plan to replace the Affordable Care Act, Colorado, alone, will lose billions of dollars of funding. Coloradans will no longer be covered by Medicaid, leaving many more people uninsured and a further burden on the rest of us, driving up our rates because we have to cover the uninsured. Even Colorado schools would be affected because many schools serve as Medicaid providers to students with disabilities, and they would lose that funding.

While the Affordable Care Act isn't perfect, I strongly oppose this Republican plan to take away insurance coverage and raise rates for Coloradans. Not only is the bill disastrous, the secretive process undermines the institution of Congress and the American people that have elected every Member of this body.

Mr. Speaker, I call on my colleagues to oppose the repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

SUPPORT DEFERMENT FOR ACTIVE CANCER TREATMENT ACT

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, Representative ED PERLMUTTER and I will be introducing the Deferment for Active Cancer Treatment Act.

In 2017, more than 1.6 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer, and many of them are currently repaying their student loans. For these individuals, a cancer diagnosis goes beyond the exhaustive treatment and increased medical expenditures and often leads to unemployment or underemployment. As a response to this growing problem, I have introduced the Deferment for Active Cancer Treatment Act.

This commonsense bill will enable cancer patients to defer payments on their public student loans while actively receiving treatment without interest accruing during this difficult period, helping them, thusly, to avoid defaults. This measure will also help lenders by empowering borrowers to continue repaying their public loans after their treatment ends, leading to fewer defaults.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join Mr. PERLMUTTER and me in standing with cancer patients

throughout our Nation and supporting the Deferment for Active Cancer Treatment Act.

DON'T DISMANTLE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the ACA and all it has done to protect the health of our country's young people.

As we gather today, everyone seems to be analyzing yesterday's elections results. Other folks have taken a deep dive to analyze whether or not Russia elected our President. And as all of this is happening, the Senate has been meeting in secrecy to dismantle the Affordable Care Act that, for millions of young people and millions of young Americans, has been a lifesaver. Since its enactment, the ACA has cut uninsured rates for Americans age 18 to 34 by more than 40 percent.

Guided by political expediency instead of principle, my Republican colleagues are jamming this bill through an approval process without hearings or input from healthcare professionals and with no regard to millions of Americans whose lives will be affected by it. This is a shocking breach of our constituents' trust.

The ACA lifted a heavy burden off the shoulders of millions of Americans, and now is not the time to kick these individuals to the curb. We are better than that, America.

COMMEMORATING AMERICAN EAGLE DAY

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I am proud once again to rise and join in commemorating June 20, 2017, as American Eagle Day and to celebrate the recovery and restoration of the bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States.

On June 20, 1782, the eagle was designated as the national symbol of the U.S. by the Founding Fathers at the Second Continental Congress. The bald eagle is the central image of the Great Seal of the United States and is displayed in the official seal of many branches and departments of the Federal Government.

The bald eagle is an inspiring symbol of freedom and the democracy of the United States. Since the founding of the Nation, the image, meaning, and symbolism of the eagle have played a significant role in art, music, history, commerce, literature, architecture, and culture of the United States.

The bald eagle's habitat exists only in North America. I hope my colleagues will join me in celebrating June 20, 2017, as American Eagle Day, which marks the recovery and restoration of the bald eagle.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1873, ELECTRICITY RELIABILITY AND FOREST PROTECTION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1654, WATER SUPPLY PERMITTING COORDINATION ACT

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 392 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 392

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1873) to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. At any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1654) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the

Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

□ 1230

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), 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. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, before I begin the rule on the two measures that are before us today, let me just make a couple of comments that have come to mind in light of the events over the last week.

Mr. Speaker, you may know that this is the first formal debate that we have had as a legislative body since last Wednesday morning's shooting. I think

it is appropriate that we take a minute to reflect and remember those who were injured and are still struggling to recover from their injuries as well as those who did not receive physical injuries on last Wednesday morning but who are still recovering.

Let me also say, if I could be so presumptuous, Mr. Speaker, I believe that perhaps some people in the United States look to us here in Congress—their Representatives—and look and see how we act towards one another and how we conduct ourselves in our interaction with each other. Let me just say that if we are disrespectful to each other, others may see that and think that it is okay; that if Congress can be that way to themselves, maybe we can act that way, too. They may not even realize that. It may be just a subconscious thing.

I ask how can we expect others to have a high opinion of us if we don't even show each other the respect that we should and that we deserve?

I believe that we must all remember that we are—before we are Republicans, before we are Democrats or Independents—all Americans. We are all here trying to do what is right, what is right for our country, certainly what is right for our constituents, and we shouldn't say that someone is not here for those purposes.

I don't know your district, Mr. Speaker, and I might say that you don't know mine. So let's argue, which is what we are here for. As ugly as sometimes it can be, that is our job, to debate on the merits of ideas. But it is not our job to win a debate by degrading the ones who are making the arguments against. I think we all have this obligation to win debates or to argue debates on the merits of the issue. Last Wednesday reminded me that it is up to us, if we want changes, to make them and to begin them here in this body.

I was heartened in our meeting as a Congress in the auditorium over at the Capitol Visitor Center that there were several Members asking for a change in tone—a change in tone in how we interact with each other. It is important that we act civilly, that we be polite, and that we be respectful—kind of like how we treat each other on the journey over here from our offices in the elevators and in the hallways.

I would assert that this is also something that is the responsibility of our President, our country's leader, someone who can set the tone for our country, someone who can describe our hopes and our dreams and help us aspire to reach those things. It is also the responsibility of our media and for those advocacy groups that we all have and that we all work with. It is up to our parties. I think it is up to every single American.

We need to rediscover the faith that we should have in each other, our respect for each other and those bonds that make us one nation under God.

Now, it is simple to state, but how do we accomplish this?

It can start right here on this floor. Say something positive. We all call each other lady and gentleman. We all start off that way, and then sometimes the gloves come off.

I can assert to you that not every idea that is presented here is all good or all bad.

What is the risk of acknowledging a good part of a larger idea even if you may disagree with that larger idea?

I believe we have some very articulate people in this body who can figure out quite easily how we can accomplish that.

We shouldn't impugn the motives of others. We don't assign blame. We don't get personal. In fact, if you look in the rules that were adopted by this Congress, in section 363 of Jefferson's Manual of Parliamentary Practice, it says: "The consequences of a measure may be reprobated in strong terms; but to arraign the motives of those who propose to advocate it is a personality, and against order."

So it says in no uncertain terms that we should not make this personal. We can object without being objectionable, and maybe—just maybe—others will see this and discover a tone that we need and a change in America. I believe that we can start this right here, today, with our very first debate right now.

Will we agree on everything?

Absolutely not. In fact, this is where our disagreements should show the most. We are duty-bound to shape legislation by pointing out weaknesses but also by accentuating strengths. Mr. Speaker, every debate, every speech on the floor or in committee, our interactions with the media, in townhalls, or press releases, we are being listened to and being watched. I hope that we can change our tone and begin to change the tone in the United States of America.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that, on Tuesday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule, House Resolution 392, providing for consideration of two important bills: H.R. 1873, which is the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act; and H.R. 1654, the Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act.

This combined rule provides for consideration of H.R. 1873 under a structured rule, making three amendments in order, all of which were submitted by Democratic Members of our Chamber. H.R. 1654 will also be considered under a structured rule, with one Democratic and one Republican amendment made in order.

H.R. 1873 will help ensure reliable electric service and reduced wildfire hazards, which can result from inadequate vegetation management near power line rights-of-way on Federally owned and operated lands.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several decades there have been numerous electricity outages as well as incidents of wildfires due to contact between power lines and trees on Federal lands.

In 1996, my home State of Washington was impacted when three power lines in the Pacific Northwest sagged onto overgrown trees, leading to a massive electricity blackout that impacted 7.5 million people across 14 Western States, two Canadian provinces, and even parts of Mexico. Then, in August of 2003, an outage left 50 million electricity customers without power when a falling tree came into contact with transmission lines.

These are not isolated incidents. According to the U.S. Forest Service, in 2012 and 2013, contact between power lines and trees on Forest Service lands led to the outbreak of 113 and 232 wildfires, respectively. This legislation would reduce such wildfires in part by promoting Federal consistency, accountability, and timely decision-making to protect electricity transmission, grid reliability, and distribution lines on Federal lands from overgrown and under-maintained trees and vegetation.

H.R. 1873 will cut red tape to create a streamlined and consistent process for removing hazardous trees and vegetation without wasting time and money before they cause a wildfire or an outage. Preventing forest fires and maintaining a reliable electrical grid for our communities is an obvious priority for all of us here in Congress, which is why I was pleased to see this bill pass through the House Natural Resources Committee with bipartisan support.

I have seen countless catastrophic wildfires devastate Western communities just in the past several years, which is why this issue must be addressed and resolved. However, due to existing regulations, it is extremely difficult for utility companies to remove hazardous vegetation or trees that have the potential of falling on these power lines.

The scope of this problem is evident when considering the U.S. Forest Service manages 155 national forests and 20 national grasslands—encompassing over 192 million acres—that include 2,700 authorized electric transmission and distribution facilities.

□ 1245

Similarly, the Bureau of Land Management administers 245 million acres, including over 71,000 miles of electrical transmission and distribution lines on its Federal lands.

In order to perform infrastructure inspections and operate and maintain power lines on these lands, electric utilities must seek permission and approval from the appropriate Federal land management agency, which typically use processes under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to assess whether the proposed vegetative management measures comply with Federal environmental laws.

This often leads to delays and cumbersome bureaucratic requirements, which often prevent utilities from carrying out important vegetative management activities on a consistent and

timely basis. Yet the costs of operating, maintaining, and repairing these electric lines on Federal lands fall to the utility companies and their customers, which can lead to higher electricity costs for ratepayers.

Mr. Speaker, the rule also provides for consideration of H.R. 1654, the Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act. This legislation will streamline the permitting process for new surface water storage projects, which is critically important for many Western and rural communities that have endured severe droughts in recent years.

Currently, the regulatory process for constructing new surface water storage projects often involves applying for a host of Federal, State, and local permits, as well as approvals from various agencies, which can be a very cumbersome, costly, and time-consuming undertaking.

Additionally, conflicting permit requirements and agency reviews can add time to the project, the planning, and implementation process while also increasing the potential for last-minute surprises that could endanger the success of a project or require significant additional work.

In order to address this problem, H.R. 1654 creates what is seen as a one-stop-shop permitting process to expedite construction of both new and expanded non-Federal surface water storage projects. The measure establishes the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for purposes of coordinating all reviews, analyses, permits, licenses, or other Federal approvals as required by law, which will streamline the current multiagency permitting process and eliminate unnecessary delays for job-creating construction projects that directly benefit local communities and economies.

As the lead agency, Reclamation will be required to coordinate and prepare the unified environmental documentation that will serve as the basis for Federal decisions authorizing the use of Federal lands, as well as to coordinate project development and the construction of qualifying projects.

Additionally, H.R. 1654 will allow the Secretary of the Interior to expedite the evaluation of permits for qualifying projects through the use of funds contributed by a non-Federal public entity.

Mr. Speaker, the rule we consider here today provides for the consideration of two bills that will have positive and lasting impacts for the American people, ratepayers, rural communities, and many Western States, as well as our entire country's economy.

H.R. 1654 will provide the type of coordination and streamlining that is essential to the development and construction of much-needed water storage projects, certainly benefiting my home State of Washington, as well as water-stricken communities across the country.

H.R. 1873 will create a framework for vegetation management near trans-

mission and distribution lines on Federal lands while also providing electric companies with much-needed clarity and defined authority to remove hazardous trees that pose a risk of falling into power lines. Managing this vegetation is a critical component in ensuring the safety and reliability of the electrical grid, which will benefit all of our constituents.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support this rule as well as the underlying legislation.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

First, I want to rise in agreement with my friend from Washington's statement about civility in this Chamber and beyond. I think that, while it is extremely important that those of us who are elected to represent 700,000 to 800,000 people reflect the passions that we bring to our service, at the same time, we need to make sure that nothing that we say in these walls or outside is used to incite those who hear those words in a different way than they are intended.

That is the fine line that we walk as elected Representatives who are passionate about our ideals and our values, and it is one that I encourage the President to walk, as well as other opinion leaders who we often see on the cable talk shows hurling inciteful phrases back and forth that could be used to further incite the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and the two underlying bills: H.R. 1873, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act; and H.R. 1654, the Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act.

Frankly, both of these bills are trying to address real problems that have bipartisan solutions that I support, but neither of these bills solve the problems in a thoughtful, effective way without creating collateral damage that, in many ways, is as damaging as the problem that they are designed to solve.

The majority will claim that similar bills received hearings last Congress, but I want to point out from a procedural perspective that neither of these bills have had hearings. These bills have not gone through the committee process. But what they won't say is there are dozens of new Members of Congress. New members of the Natural Resources Committee didn't have hearings at all, but it was rushed through a markup in committee and to the floor without any hearings in this session, without the new members of the National Resources Committee having a chance to ask questions about these bills.

There is a reason we have regular order. It is so that we elected Representatives can use the passion we bring to service to ask the difficult

questions to find out how to get at these very real problems that we are trying to solve.

Unfortunately, this secrecy, lack of hearings, and lack of participation appears to be the norm, and, in fact, the standard that Republicans are setting in both Chambers of Congress right now. It is how the Republicans handled the healthcare bill in the House. It is how the Republicans are handling the secret healthcare bill behind a closed door somewhere over in the Senate.

We know some things about the Republican healthcare bill. We know it will increase healthcare costs, throw people off their insurance, reduce access for the American people. We know it will burden small businesses and the middle class. We know it will hand hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. But there is also a lot we don't know because the process has been closed. This type of secret backroom deal is, unfortunately, becoming the norm of the way Republicans are running their agenda in Washington.

The rule for this bill is another example. It blocked at least three amendments from being considered on the floor.

Why can't we discuss the ideas of all Members, especially since there was no hearing on this bill?

Representative MCEACHIN from Virginia, Representative SCHNEIDER from Illinois, and Representative TORRES from California all offered amendments, all had good ideas and were not even allowed to discuss those on the floor for 10 minutes, 5 minutes, not even for 1 minute, to offer or discuss any of those amendments.

If my colleagues on the Republican side don't think they are good ideas, let's at least have a vote. They can vote against them. If they defeat them, that is the process. But they are not even allowing a vote on these amendments.

Unfortunately, the process of this bill is typical of the Republican process on healthcare and the way they have approached so many other issues. Republicans are working in secret and limiting debates so the American people won't see the horrible things they are trying to do, like throwing tens of millions of Americans off of healthcare.

Now, getting to these bills.

First, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act has the goal of preventing forest fires and disruptions to power distribution; something that I strongly agree with.

I represent a district that has over 60 percent public land and a number of rural power districts. It is an admirable goal. We are a district that is at risk for forest fires. We had several devastating fires in the last several years alone. In fact, I am representing a State that is getting even more ravaged by fire, in light of the changing climate.

We need to take action to prevent them and allow additional work with

regard to preventing the forest fire risk. Unfortunately, this bill is not a positive step, but I am glad to say there is an alternative out there.

Representative CRAMER from North Dakota and I, along with five of my Colorado delegation colleagues, recently introduced bipartisan legislation that will decrease these types of fires and protect power lines and transformers the right way—a way that Democrats and Republicans can agree on; a way that we can probably run the bill as a suspension and get 410 votes; a way that the stakeholders are involved and utilities, fire prevention experts and firefighters, environmentalists all agree on.

My legislation, known as the National Forest System Vegetation Management Pilot Program Act of 2017, gives power and electricity companies the ability to remove dead trees, but without the recklessness included in the bill that we are considering today.

It is a stark contrast. We can actually solve this problem in a way that would bring the country together, or there can be a divisive bill—maybe against one Democrat, maybe against five; I don't know, but it is not a broadly bipartisan bill. It is not one that has the support of the communities that are most affected by forest fires in my district. It is not even a bill that has the support of our main utility company in Colorado that actually sought the ability to reduce forest fire risks, which is done by Representative CRAMER's and my bill.

This bill we are considering today simply lacks the protections that we need to have confidence. In this bill, the company can come up with a plan to remove vegetation, and then it can be accepted with no questions asked. They can't require them to fix obvious problems, like the power company cutting down trees for no reason other than to sell it for timber. They can't even deny an application.

Frankly, I think this legislation's real goal is to take a small step toward turning management of public lands over to private industry.

Once this plan that they would submit under this bill is approved—because the plans have to be approved—the utility companies would be able to do massive devegetation and clearing work without any reason related to fires and without any risk of liability.

On the other hand, the bipartisan legislation I introduced with Mr. CRAMER gives that liability waiver that the utility companies need to do the additional work, but only if there is no gross negligence by the utility company and has something to do with actually reducing the risk of fires, as well as putting reasonable limits on the distance that the work can be done from the power lines or transformers themselves.

Mr. CRAMER's and my bill has some of the most conservative and some of the most liberal Members of this body as cosponsors. So I just wonder and I ask

the majority leader why we aren't bringing that bill to the floor—a bill that lacks controversy, that helps prevent forest fires, that saves American people time and money, a bill that this body could be proud of advancing with, if not all, almost near unanimity.

I would suggest that, instead of bringing the bill we are considering today to the floor, we should have been focused on fixing something that we know needs to be fixed: the Forest Service's problem with fire borrowing.

Fire borrowing means the Forest Service has to spend all their money fighting fires and little money to reduce the risk of forest fires, deal with climate change, or clear the extensive backlog of maintenance. We can do that today by bringing to the floor the bipartisan Wildfire Disaster Funding Act that Representative SIMPSON and I introduced, along with my colleague, Mr. SCHRADER.

These are the types of commonsense measures that would actually reduce the risk of forest fires, put the right parameters around utility companies doing additional work, and free up additional resources to prevent forest fires from occurring, rather than simply doing the cleanup after they occur.

H.R. 1654, the Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act, also is an admirable and needed goal, one that there is potential for bipartisan cooperation to speed up the process of approval of water projects and hydro dams.

There truly is a problem with the speed of which some of these problems are approved. I represent a district and a State where we understand how difficult and important water is, and we also believe in the new renewable energy economy.

Unfortunately, this bill also does it the wrong way. It circumvents and undermines important input from experts and scientists that actually understand the reviews that are being made by the Clean Water Act. It even circumvents tribal sovereignty in the Native American Tribes and their sacred lands by overriding their input.

That is why a wide spectrum of organizations are opposed, from conservation groups like Oceana and League of Conservation Voters to sportsmen's groups like Trout Unlimited and The Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations. Dozens are opposed to this reckless bill.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter of opposition.

JULY 20, 2017.

PLEASE OPPOSE H.R. 1654

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to urge you to oppose H.R. 1654 (McClintock, R-CA), a bill that would significantly limit meaningful public and environmental review of new dams and other surface storage projects throughout the west. H.R. 1654 would likely reduce protections for fish and wildlife, and could lead to further damming and destruction of western waterways. Similar provisions were included in H.R. 2898 and H.R. 23—anti-environmental bills from 2015 and 2017, respectively—and the Department of Interior

has previously expressed opposition to these efforts.

H.R. 1654 would undermine existing laws by making the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation ("Reclamation") the lead agency for all environmental reviews, including reviews under the Endangered Species Act. Giving Reclamation this unprecedented power over project permitting could undermine the ability of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and N.O.A.A. Fisheries to share expertise and inform the development of major infrastructure investments, placing imperiled fish species at risk. H.R. 1654 also establishes strict project-review timelines, including provisions that could require expedited review under the National Environmental Policy Act. These fast-tracking provisions could make it difficult for responsible agencies to meaningfully analyze proposed projects, and could limit the public's ability to weigh in on infrastructure that could affect communities for decades. Further, the bill permits non-federal public entities to contribute funds to expedite project permitting, raising questions about the fairness of the federal review process.

This damaging bill would affect states throughout the west, and could even impact how state agencies are able review proposed projects within their jurisdictions. H.R. 1654 allows states to subject state agencies to the bill's procedures, thereby requiring those agencies to cede control to Reclamation and comply with Reclamation's timelines. Consolidating project review in this manner could weaken the essential role that states play in reviewing water infrastructure projects within their jurisdictions.

As we recently learned from the emergency at Oroville Dam in California, careful planning and design for major infrastructure projects is critical for ensuring public safety and protecting the environment. Environmental review of surface storage projects is also essential for protecting endangered and commercially important salmon runs and the thousands of jobs that depend on healthy salmon populations. With so much at stake, the streamlining provisions in H.R. 1654 are unwise and irresponsible. Instead of fast tracking dam projects in the West, we should be investing in fiscally sound, environmentally friendly water supply solutions like conservation, water use efficiency, wastewater recycling, and stormwater capture.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to vote no on H.R. 1654.

Sincerely,

American Rivers
Audubon California
California Trout
Cascadia Wildlands
Center for Biological Diversity
Clean Water Action
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Protection Information Center
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the River
Grand Canyon Trust
Klamath Forest Alliance
League of Conservation Voters
Living With Wolves
Native Plant Conservation Campaign
Natural Resources Defense Council
Oceana
Sierra Club
The Bay Institute
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Watersheds Project
WildEarth Guardians
Wilderness Workshop
Wildlands Network.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, the letter is signed by a number of sportsmen and environmental organizations, the very groups that we should seek to work with, the very groups that actually support, as I do, hydropower, facilitated permitting of hydropower, the right way.

We need to speed up the process. In Colorado, we have had water projects that have been waiting on a decision for far too long.

□ 1300

But instead of going around experts, rolling over tribal sovereignty, why don't we fund the agencies doing the reviews so that they have the manpower and time to look at an application, give feedback, and make a decision quickly?

Again and again we have underfunded the Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA, not acknowledging that that is what is causing and contributing to this very slowdown.

We can solve these issues that we are facing. We can expedite permitting for water projects and hydropower. We can allow utilities to do additional work to reduce the risk of forest fires.

I call upon this body, please, let's do it in a way that brings Democrats and Republicans together, proudly gets a bill to President Trump's desk in a fast and effective way involving input from Democrats and Republicans, not just Republicans.

Mr. DOGGETT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. POLIS. I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I would just ask the gentleman a couple questions to underline a couple of the really important points you made about the context in which this bill is considered, because while I think every Democrat agrees with our colleague from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) about the importance of civility and the importance of us each taking responsibility for the tone here and certainly condemning violence, condemning anyone who would suggest that if you come to the rally and you protest that you ought to be beaten up by the people that are there, the kind of thing that happened, unfortunately, last year, that we should condemn all of that. Does the gentleman agree that the House exercising vigorous oversight of the Administration when it breaks its promises, when it mixes personal business with public business, that this remains an important aspect of our job and no way suggests a breach of civility?

Mr. POLIS. Absolutely. I agree with the gentleman from Texas. This House and the institution of Congress, as a separate agency of government in Article I, section 1 of our Constitution has the responsibility to exercise oversight of the executive branch.

Mr. DOGGETT. If the gentleman would further yield, I heard a rather bizarre comment last week in the after-

math of these shootings suggesting that, in the aftermath of them, Democrats would be reaching out to Republicans on healthcare, and I couldn't quite understand how that could occur. Indeed, your comments about this particular set of bills and the healthcare bill, isn't it a part of civility that we have respect for one another and don't try to force through a bill with an all-night, unnecessary session, not force through here a bill that Republican Members say they didn't have time to read but then leave it up there on the Speaker's desk for a month before even sending it to the Senate? And if you have a legislative process where the majority leader in the Senate says he won't even guarantee 10 hours to see a huge bill that affects this much of the economy and the lives and the livelihoods of millions of Americans, that that in itself is a breach of the respect and the civility that we need to have in this Congress?

Mr. POLIS. It absolutely is.

Sometimes the American people in the back-and-forth say: Hey, why aren't Democrats participating in the healthcare debate? And the reason, as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) articulated, is we have never been invited into this room.

I would ask the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT): Have you seen the Republican healthcare bill in the Senate?

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DOGGETT. No. I served on the Ways and Means Committee. We could not see the Republican House bill until hours before it came up.

Mr. POLIS. Isn't that too short a period of time to even come up with a thoughtful amendment?

Mr. DOGGETT. It was under police guard downstairs so that even Republicans, like Senator RAND PAUL, couldn't get in and see the bill.

Then we have an all-night session without a single member of the Trump Administration coming to respond to questions about it, while every healthcare professional group that I have heard of opposed the bill, not letting any of those people come to a hearing. I just suggest that this is a breach of civility. That is a breach of respect. It is a breach of the democratic process which we are all about. That needs to be on the table and is as important as whether someone uses strong language here in the House.

Mr. POLIS. I have one more question on that.

I am a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, one of the three committees that had original jurisdiction over the Affordable Care Act. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is a member of the Ways and Means Committee, one of the two committees with jurisdiction under the budget reconciliation for this healthcare bill. I want to ask: Have you ever been invited by President Trump to discuss your ideas for healthcare reform?

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DOGGETT. No. I think he has only wanted to listen to one side, and I don't begin to think that even the Republican Members of this House can contain President Trump. They seem to have sealed their lips about it, and I wish they would speak out more.

But I think they can effect the processes in this House, and when they pass a bill that President Trump says is "mean, mean, mean," they need to go back and look at that process. And I see the same thing happening, from what you have told us, about the two bills that are up here.

Why is it that we have a process that is designed to exclude almost half of the people in this House, to exclude their amendments, to give them no opportunity to be heard at a markup, to bring in no witnesses to defend the bill or to allow discussion of that bill? That is not only not civil, not the democratic process, but it leads to worse public policy.

Even if they have a majority to pass it, their ideas need to be tested, and it allows them to perfect their legislation. That is the way the democratic process is supposed to work. But with all the secrecy, all the forced action, the tight timetables that are applying here, they thwart our democratic process in a way that hurts all sides and certainly impairs civility.

Mr. POLIS. I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) and would just add, look, fire prevention, expediting water projects and hydropower, these are not partisan issues; and to prove that point, there are bipartisan bills sponsored by conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats that would solve these issues. Rather than moving either of those bills through the floor, they are moving a divisive ideological bill with unintended consequences—or, perhaps, intended consequences—that would devastate a lot of our natural resources that sportsmen and recreationists rely on for our quality of life in the mountain West and across the country.

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, the beauty of having a diverse membership in this body is that we have people from all over the country who live and breathe the issues that are before us. We are privileged today to have the young lady from Wilson, Wyoming (Ms. CHENEY) here to speak on these bills. I appreciate her offering to help in these arguments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms. CHENEY), my young colleague.

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank very much my colleague from Washington particularly for calling me "young." I appreciate that always.

Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed listening to the colloquy taking place among my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. We see this repeatedly now day

in and day out as we work hard in the majority to continue the progress that we have made so far in this Congress, really record-breaking progress of passing legislation, putting bills on the President's desk, having those bills signed into law. Mr. Speaker, I believe we are now at the point where we have presented more bills to the President and had more bills signed than in any Congress in the first term of any Presidency since Harry Truman. It is a record we are very proud of over here.

It is clear that as we continue to put commonsense reform legislation forward that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle would sometimes like to distract and talk about other things. In terms of the healthcare conversation that is going on and the talk of unintended consequences, I would just point out, Mr. Speaker, that we now know the consequences of ObamaCare. We have had to live under ObamaCare now for many years. We are in a situation where the system is absolutely failing the people of this country, and we have an obligation as a body, an obligation we take seriously here in the House, to make sure that we do what is right for the people of this country, that we provide them relief, that we provide them the kind of healthcare reform that is going to lower their costs, that is going to provide better access to care and put people back in charge.

We have tried the Democrats' way now for the last 7 years and fundamentally seen that the government cannot mandate effectively what people need. It doesn't have the consequences that many on the other side of the aisle thought it would, and the consequences have been devastating.

Mr. Speaker, the same is true in terms of the challenge that we are here dealing with today with these two bills. As my colleague from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) so eloquently put it, those of us across the West—and Mr. POLIS knows this well, too—have had to live under this situation of absolutely devastating forest fires, forest fires that have been caused in too many instances by mismanagement by the Forest Service, mismanagement by the Federal Government.

These bills—and in particular, H.R. 1873, which is a bill that I am honored to cosponsor with Representative LAMALFA—will begin to impose the kind of commonsense reforms that we need so that our power grid is no longer threatened by mismanagement of our Federal Forest Service, of our Federal forestlands.

On our federally managed forest in Wyoming, when we have overgrowth around a power line, it is a direct risk to the people, the property, and the power grid, as well as to the wildlife that those on the other side of the aisle claim to care so much about.

Our local leaders understand this. Our local leaders are in the very best position to do something about this and to do it quickly. That is why we put in place these provisions in these

bills that will allow the local utilities, allow local officials, to make the kinds of decisions that have to be made quickly.

H.R. 1873 will allow our utilities to submit their own management facility inspection plans, their own operation and maintenance plans, and it will also ensure that our Federal land managers have consistent and accountable policies to reduce hazards in electricity rights-of-way, including they, themselves, will be held accountable for managing the land. The bill does adjust the liability framework for these rights-of-way to ensure that the utilities and the Federal Government have the incentive to respond quickly and effectively to these hazards.

Nobody in Wyoming or in any other State ought to feel that they have to go without affordable, reliable power, ought to feel that the power grid is threatened simply because the Federal Government fails to do its job. We have simply seen that too much. Our local co-ops are willing and able to step up to the plate.

Solving this problem is crucial to those who live in Wyoming, where bark beetle-killed trees and poorly managed overgrowth of Federal forests pose true threats to the safety and health of our communities and to our power reliability. Mr. Speaker, that is why H.R. 1873 is supported by the Wyoming Rural Electric Association, the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Black Hills Energy, the Edison Electric Institute, the American Public Power Association, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Western Governors Association, and many others who care so much about our lands out West.

Wyoming supports this bill. Wyoming utility co-ops know best how to manage the provision of electricity and how to handle these rights-of-way and also how to provide healthy and sustainable forest management as they do so.

Mr. Speaker, I request immediate passage of this bill. It is hugely important that we get back on track, that we stop the kind of mismanagement from Washington that has been so damaging for so many years, and I urge my colleagues in Congress to act quickly on its passage.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, President Trump campaigned on a promise to bring, somehow, jobs back home. He said he was going to overhaul the Tax Code, introduce an infrastructure package, and remove barriers to job creation. Unfortunately, we have yet to hear specifics on any of the administration's plans to accomplish that.

My colleagues will be happy to hear that in my hand I have an amendment that will help to accomplish this goal by providing tax incentives to companies that bring overseas jobs back home. What a great idea.

Mr. Speaker, when we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amend-

ment to the rule to bring up Representative PASCRELL's Bring Jobs Home Act, H.R. 685. This bill closes a tax loophole that actually rewards companies for moving jobs overseas while providing a tax credit to companies that move jobs back home to our country, the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) to discuss our proposal.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule.

Here we are again. We are debating a bill to roll back regulations that protect the public, if I am not mistaken, Mr. Speaker. I think we are a little bit tone deaf.

Here is a news flash: The whole country is focused on defending blue-collar jobs, bolstering our industrial manufacturing base. Americans broadly agree that keeping United States jobs from moving overseas is a top priority. Yet despite campaign promises, the administration has awarded government contracts to companies that continue to offshore.

□ 1315

You can't make this up. So we say one thing and then we do another. Now, look, both parties do it. Neither party is privy to virtue. But let me tell you something, there is a plethora of these before us on saying one thing when you are campaigning and not following through. That is not good.

The flow of jobs overseas is not stopping. Just this week, it was announced that Ford is canceling plans to build the Ford Focus in Mexico, ending North American production entirely and making the model almost completely in China beginning next year, as soon as its output ends at a plant in Michigan.

Yet, right now, when companies move overseas, as the gentleman from Colorado just said, we actually give them a reward. We give them a tax break for the cost of moving. Do you think that is going to impede or help people deciding whether they should stay or go? A tax break for leaving. The average citizen never gets that kind of a break. I mean, that is the law. I am not making it up. I will stand corrected, if need be, Mr. Speaker.

We need to stop offshoring these jobs. And this Congress should start by defeating the previous question and bringing up the Bring Jobs Home Act.

Around 5 million U.S. manufacturing jobs have been lost since 1994. Just ask folks in places like Ohio and Pennsylvania who have seen steel mills and rubber factories shipped overseas.

Come to my hometown of Paterson, New Jersey, formerly the hub of the textile manufacturing industry.

My bill eliminates this tax deduction to those companies and those corporations who want to bring their jobs overseas, and it gives a tax credit of up to 20 percent of the cost to U.S. businesses that bring jobs back to the United States of America. The companies would have to add jobs to claim the tax benefit.

So let's stop subsidizing companies that ship jobs overseas and start bringing jobs back to our shores.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't get much simpler than that.

This is not a new idea. President Obama and Democrats in Congress have raised this bill for years, and the Republican Congress has blocked our bill at every turn. Senator STABENOW of Michigan leads this bill in the Senate, where it cleared a procedural vote 93-7 in 2014.

I challenge you, today, to take up and pass this bill to stand up for American manufacturing and the workers here at home. Talk only goes so far. Let's act.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, isn't it good to hear good news? I just got this on my electronic device here.

The MedStar: "Congressman Steve Scalise continues to make good progress. He is now listed in fair condition and is beginning an extended period of healing and rehabilitation."

Isn't that good news?

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, let me just say that it is good news that our brother from Louisiana is in fair condition. I appreciate that news report.

And I also want to take up the previous speaker's offer to work with us on tax reform. We look forward to his assistance in moving that issue forward.

I might say that he is mistaken. The bill that we are talking about today is about protecting public interests. The last time I checked, people who I know like green trees, not black ones; they like their electricity to be there when they turn their light switch on; and they like water. These are three issues that we are looking to protect and make sure that people in the United States can enjoy all of these attributes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK) to talk about exactly that.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE), my colleague on the Rules Committee, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, in the West, water is life. Coloradans must wisely steward

the precious water flowing through our lands. That is why we are so focused on water storage projects.

Unfortunately, many water storage projects in my State face significant setbacks in permitting due to a long list of regulatory checkboxes. Local, State, and Federal agencies all have their own requirements.

For the past several years, I have followed multiple important water storage projects on the front range of Colorado that deeply impact Coloradans. Year after year, the shovels remain untouched as the water projects inched their way through the regulatory permitting process. Water projects should not take over 10 years to permit and then only a few years to build.

Much of this delay occurs because each level of government—local, State, and Federal—requires their own studies and permitting checklists, even though many of those requirements are the same or only slightly different.

H.R. 1654 makes this process more efficient, allowing the Bureau of Reclamation to coordinate the Federal and State permitting processes, so that we can avoid unnecessary duplication and so that we can better unify the approval requirements.

H.R. 1654 offers a more streamlined approval process for our water projects but still empowers State and Federal governments to fulfill our duties to protect communities and the environment.

This is a good government bill. We are simply asking different levels of government to work together so that our water projects can earn the permits they rightfully qualify for.

No water project should take 10 years to gain approval, but too many have. H.R. 1654 ensures that projects on Federal lands will have a clear, more efficient permit application process.

We owe this bill to the people of Colorado; we owe this bill to the people of the West. We owe this bill to everyone in this country who relies on fresh, clean drinking water. We owe it to the farmers who need water for their crops, to the ranchers who need water for their livestock, to the anglers who need water for their recreation.

I am supporting H.R. 1654 for these people. I ask my colleagues to support this important legislation as well.

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

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK), my friend, that there is a problem here we are trying to solve. Unfortunately, these are not the bipartisan bills that Democrats and Republicans from both sides of the aisle have worked hard to put together to do.

Of course, Democrats, myself, and so many others want to expedite water projects permitting for hydro renewable energy projects. Of course, we want to free up utilities to do extra mitigation work around power lines to reduce the risk of fires. We have solid bipartisan bills that would do that. We

could put them on the floor today or tomorrow, and they would have over 400 votes. There are liberal Democrats, conservative Republicans, and firefighters who support them. Utilities, Democrats, Republicans, and sportsmen support them.

That is a route we could go. We could get those bills to President Trump's desk by next week and actually start preventing forest fires and facilitate the permitting process around hydro projects. But, no, instead, we are doing a very divisive bill, one that has a lot of problems that it creates, in addition to solving some of the problems that it sets out to address.

I encourage my Republican friends—they are in charge; they control the agenda—to take a look at pragmatic, smart, and thoughtful ways to reduce forest fire risk, speed up water project approval, such as the bipartisan National Forest System Vegetation Management Pilot Program Act, which is a bipartisan bill.

Look, this bill around the expedited water projects would circumvent a lot of the public input process that is actually so important to the success of these projects. My colleague from Colorado was referring to several water projects. One that we both care deeply about, the Northern Integrated Supply Project, NISP, is currently with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation.

I strongly supported extending the public comment period from 30 to 60 days—a very reasonable time to allow people more input, which actually changed how the project was done and planned. It was a very meaningful form of input to build additional public support for the project; and, when the project is completed, will lead to a better, more meaningful project, serving the water needs of our communities, as well as the impact on the lives of those who live in and near it.

So, look, whether it is fixing fire borrowing, giving utilities a liability waiver while not giving them a free pass, making sure that our agencies doing water project reviews have the men and women power they need to actually get them done quickly, these are reasonable, good ideas that I think we could pass with unanimity, or near unanimity.

I promise the Republicans, if you would just work with us and have an open process, we could find common ground. Let's start with these small things. Let's start with preventing forest fires around electrical fires. We will get to healthcare. We can find common ground with you on that, too.

But let's start on finding common ground around reducing forest fire risk around electrical wires, Mr. Speaker. There is a path to do that. Let's solve our small problems, and let's build a pathway to work together on the big problems our country faces.

I urge everyone to vote "no" on this restrictive rule, this rule that goes to the floor with no hearing, this rule

that rules out Democratic amendments, doesn't even allow discussion of them, and has a controversial piece of underlying legislation, when there is no need for controversy around such an important aspect of life in the American West, and, nationally, reducing forest fire risk and facilitating water projects and hydroelectric projects. Please join me in voting "no," so we can get this House back to working on commonsense legislation that is bipartisan, with the full support of the American people.

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

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

I appreciate the time of my colleagues, who have joined me on the floor today, to speak in support of these underlying bills, as well as for the hard work of the House Natural Resources Committee.

First of all, H.R. 1873 is a bipartisan bill by any measure—five Democratic cosponsors, passed bipartisanly through the committee.

This will reduce the threat of electricity outages caused by contact between overgrown trees and power lines. It is that simple.

Existing Federal regulations and red tape can make it extremely difficult for utilities to gain the access that they need to their rights of way in order to perform needed maintenance. Before taking this action, they must receive approval from Federal agencies. They have been criticized for not allowing these utilities to carry out vegetative management policies on a consistent and timely basis.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, just one down tree on a transmission line can have devastating impacts, causing blackouts for thousands or millions of homes as well as businesses, or it can ignite fires that consume entire forests. Yet it can take months to remove one single tree, due to our outdated Federal regulations and cumbersome bureaucracy.

H.R. 1654 streamlines the current multiagency permitting system, which creates significant delays for project construction and completion, by creating a one-stop shop, a permitting process at the Bureau of Reclamation.

Mr. Speaker, the Bureau was created to oversee water resource management in the West and to prevent water shortages by building dams and conveyance systems. Yet, over the past 40 years, Federal regulations and policies have slowly made it increasingly difficult to build dams and reservoirs throughout the Western United States. Presently, it is nearly impossible to even expand the storage capacity at existing facilities.

The Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act establishes a framework where the Federal agencies with jurisdiction over new surface water storage projects must work together, coordinate their schedules, share technical information and data, and publish their

findings publicly. This important measure will allow water providers to better manage their systems to modernize and enhance their water storage infrastructure and optimize water resource management in preparation for future droughts and shortages, which we know will come.

□ 1330

The Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act will prevent wildfires and power outages while enabling utilities to safely supply electricity to rural and Western communities.

H.R. 1873 will ensure that practical measures are taken to protect power lines and conserve our public lands, which is especially important in Western States where overgrown Federal forests are too often the norm rather than the exception.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the rule provides for consideration of two commonsense measures that will implement much needed improvements to the Federal management of our water resources, our Federal lands and forests, and electricity infrastructure. I urge my colleagues to support this rule as well as the underlying bills.

The material previously referred to by Mr. POLIS is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 392 OFFERED BY
MR. POLIS

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

SEC. 3. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 685) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage domestic insourcing and discourage foreign outsourcing. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 4. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 685.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT
IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and

a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's *Precedents of the House of Representatives* (VI, 308-311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition."

The Republican majority may say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the *Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives*, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: "Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment."

In *Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives*, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: "Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. 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. POLIS. Mr. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of the privileges of the House and offer the resolution that was previously noticed, asking that it be read in full concerning President Trump's tax returns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President shall immediately disclose his tax return information to the House of Representatives and the American people.

Whereas, President Nixon explained that "People have got to know whether or not their President is a crook" when he invited the Joint Committee on Taxation to audit his returns after the Internal Revenue Service gave him an unwarranted tax discount;

Whereas, according to the Tax History Project, every President since Gerald Ford has disclosed his tax return information to the public;

Whereas, the Chairmen of the Committee on Ways and Means, Joint Committee on Taxation, and the Committee on Finance have the authority to request the President's tax returns under section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

Whereas, pursuant to Article I, section 7, clause 1 of the Constitution, often referred to as the Origination Clause, the House of Representatives has the sole authority to initiate legislation that raises revenue for the national government, and the Committee on Ways and Means is considering a comprehensive reform of the Tax Code;

Whereas, according to media reports analyzing President Trump's leaked 2005 tax return, we know that had his own tax plan been in place, he would have paid an estimated mere 3.48 percent rate instead of a 24 percent rate, saving him \$31.3 million;

Whereas, according to The New York Times, the President used a legally dubious tax maneuver in 1995 that could have allowed him to avoid paying any Federal taxes for 18 years;

Whereas, President Trump holds "interests as the sole or principal owner in approximately 500 separate entities," according to his attorneys, and the President's tax plan proposes to cut the tax rate on such "pass-through" entities from 39.6 percent to 15 percent;

Whereas, one analysis estimated that President Trump would personally save \$6.7 million from two tax breaks included in the Republicans' first tax cut, which they misleadingly call the American Health Care Act;

Whereas, without the President's tax returns, the American people cannot determine how much he will personally benefit from proposed changes to the Tax Code;

Whereas, an ABCNews/Washington Post poll found that 74 percent of Americans would like President Trump to disclose his tax returns and the most-signed petition on the White House website calls for the release of the President's tax return information to verify compliance with the Emoluments Clause, with more than 1,097,000 signatures as of date of this resolution;

Whereas, disclosure of the President's tax returns could help those investigating Rus-

sian influence in the 2016 election better understand the President's financial ties to the Russian Federation, Russian businesses, and Russian individuals;

Whereas, after breaking his pledge to make his tax returns available, President Trump instead presented a one-page letter from a law firm giving him a clean bill of health on any business dealings with Russians, but failed to note that the very same law firm boasted of the "prestigious honor" of being named "Russia Law Firm of the Year" for 2016;

Whereas, former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey, before he was fired by President Trump, publicly confirmed that the Bureau has been investigating potential ties between President Trump's campaign and Russia since July and that the Russian President Vladimir Putin favored a Trump electoral victory;

Whereas, President Trump's son-in-law and senior advisor, Jared Kushner, met during the Presidential transition at the behest of the Russian Ambassador with Sergey N. Gorkov, a graduate of a school run by the successor to the KGB and who was appointed by Vladimir Putin to head a Russian state-owned bank that is on the U.S. sanctions list;

Whereas, Mr. Kushner proposed establishing a secret back channel of communications directly to Vladimir Putin, even considering the use of Russian embassy facilities to do so;

Whereas, Attorney General Jeff Sessions falsely stated during his Senate confirmation hearing that he "did not have communications with the Russians," when in fact he met at least twice during the campaign with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak;

Whereas, former Director Comey testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee that President Trump had asked him in the Oval Office about "letting Flynn go," referring to the investigation into former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn's business ties to Russia;

Whereas, President Trump stated on May 11, 2017, that he had decided that he was going to fire Comey because of "this Russia thing";

Whereas, former Director Comey, on June 8, 2017, testified that Special Counsel Robert Mueller could investigate whether President Trump's actions with regard to Director Comey and the Flynn investigation constituted obstruction of justice;

Whereas, in 2013, President Trump said, "Well, I've done a lot of business with the Russians. They're smart and they're tough," and President Trump's son, Donald Trump, Jr., told a news outlet in 2008 that "Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets";

Whereas, against the advice of ethics attorneys and the nonpartisan Office of Government Ethics, the President has refused to divest his ownership stake in his businesses;

Whereas, the Director of the nonpartisan Office of Government Ethics said that the President's plan to transfer his business holdings to a trust managed by family members is "meaningless" and "does not meet the standards that . . . every President in the past four decades has met";

Whereas, the Emoluments Clause was included in the Constitution for the express purpose of preventing Federal officials from accepting any "present, Emolument, Office, or Title . . . from any King, Prince, or foreign state";

Whereas, the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C., has hired a "director of diplomatic sales" to generate high-priced business among foreign leaders and diplomatic delegations;

Whereas, the Joint Committee on Taxation reviewed the tax returns of President Rich-

ard Nixon in 1974 and made the information public;

Whereas, the Committee on Ways and Means used the authority under section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 in 2014 to make public the confidential tax information of 51 taxpayers;

Whereas, the Committee on Ways and Means has now voted three times along party lines to continue to cover-up President Trump's tax returns;

Whereas, the House of Representatives has now refused nine times to act on President Trump's tax returns;

Whereas, the American people have the right to know whether or not their President is operating under conflicts of interest related to international affairs, tax reform, Government contracts, or otherwise;

Whereas, the House of Representatives undermines its dignity and the integrity of its proceedings by continuing the cover-up of President Trump's tax returns: Now, therefore, be it;

Resolved, That the House of Representatives shall—

1. Immediately request the tax return and return information of Donald J. Trump for tax years 2006 through 2015, as provided under section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as well as the tax return and return information with respect to the President's businesses of each business entity disclosed by Donald J. Trump on his Office of Government Ethics Form 278e, specifically each corporation and each partnership within the meaning of subchapter K of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 where he is listed as an officer, director, or equivalent, or exercises working control; and

2. Postpone consideration of tax reform legislation until the elected Representatives of the American people in this House have obtained President Trump's tax returns and return information to ascertain how any changes to the Tax Code might financially benefit the President.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Texas wish to present argument on the parliamentary question whether the resolution presents a question of the privileges of the House?

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I do wish to address the parliamentary question and would appreciate the opportunity to speak at this time about it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized on the question of order.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, you can certainly observe, as all the Members can, the many troubling events that are reflected in the resolution we just had read and why they do arise to the privileges of the House.

Under clause 1 of rule IX, questions of the privileges of the House are: "those affecting the rights of the House collectively, its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings."

This resolution seeks to protect the integrity of the proceedings of the House, and I believe that it is therefore privileged. There is just not an issue that is more fundamental to the integrity of this House, the people's House, than the faith the American people have in our democracy.

That sacred faith is being undermined. It is under assault right now by President Trump. This House must act to protect the integrity of its proceedings.

Now, I know that there are many Members here who are eager to avoid a direct up-and-down vote on the specific question of covering up the Trump tax returns, and that there have been nine previous times when Members have come to the floor and presented resolutions that were focused on trying to get those returns and to end the cover-up.

Recognizing the Speaker's prior rulings nine times against considering this measure, I have, today, offered a different resolution, taking a new approach that I bring to the Speaker's attention. Unlike the last nine resolutions, my resolution does not direct the Committee on Ways and Means to meet and consider action on these secreted tax returns.

I believe it should not be ruled out of order on the grounds that were used the previous nine times that this type of resolution was blocked. This coverup of the Trump returns must end, and that is why I have taken a different approach.

Pursuant to Article I, section 7, clause 1 of the United States Constitution, what we know as the Origination Clause, the House of Representatives has the sole authority to initiate legislation that raises revenue for the national government.

As the Speaker knows, that means the House Ways and Means Committee, on which I serve, on which Mr. PASCRELL, who I know wants to comment on this point of order, is concerned, for this House to exercise with integrity its authority to originate tax legislation. This is authority that it solely possesses. The American people should know how the President and his family might personally benefit from the tax legislation, either in their direct personal income or through the many business intermediaries with which they work. I believe some 500-plus entities reported on their financial disclosure statement.

President Trump, we know, has bragged publicly about his ability to bend the Tax Code to his whim in the past. He has said only he can "fix it."

And the question is: Will he fix it for himself, or fix it for working families? Will he enrich the middle class with jobs, or simply enrich himself and other billionaires like him?

While recently Mr. Trump has provided us a single page of clues concerning the contents of his tax plan that they now say will be provided fully in September, he has not given us much detail. But he does give us a few clues off that one page. One is his proposal to repeal the alternative minimum tax. We know if that had been the law, if that Trump proposal had been in effect for the one year, 2005, that we have his return, he would have paid about the amount that an employee does on their Social Security. It would have saved him \$30 million.

I understand that there are many here that simply don't want to look under the rock to see what is contained

in those returns. And there are many who believe that Mr. Trump is the golden ticket to more prized tax breaks, to more ending of consumer protection, and they have been rather quiet about the tax return issue, about the conflicts of interest, and about the potential foreign collusion.

But after all the resolutions presented here on the floor, nine, plus the amendments that I have offered in the Ways and Means Committee that have been rejected, I can say that, while there has not been progress yet on the House floor, there has been progress.

Mr. Trump has responded. He provided a one-page letter from a lawyer that reviewed his tax returns, and that lawyer gave a Good Housekeeping "seal of approval" to assure us—"to assure America he had no business dealings with the Russians as a result of reviewing the returns."

What he did not say was that the same law firm had boasted of what they call the prestigious honor of being named the "Russia Law Firm of the Year." I would just say today, in response specifically to the point of order, that it is not sufficient to preserve the integrity of this House to rely on the "Russia Law Firm of the Year" to be the only entity that reviews these returns.

□ 1345

I believe that we can do better; that we must protect the dignity of the House.

According to Mr. Trump himself, he is already being investigated for obstruction of justice. It is important for us to have the tax returns on tax reform. It is important to have it on the Russia investigation.

And, you know, there is hardly an hour that goes by, certainly a day that goes by, that there is not some additional information. When I opened The Washington Post this morning, right there on the front page—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman must confine his remarks to the question of privilege.

Mr. DOGGETT. Certainly.

And one of those aspects of the question of privilege is how conflicts of interest interface with what we are doing here in the House. I mentioned the tax returns and the Russia investigation, but there is a new one out today, and that is in the budget. I assume eventually we are going to have a budget resolution presented here, though it is very late this year. But when we take up that budget resolution and we take up the appropriation bills, The Washington Post reports that, while there have been significant cuts in the Housing and Urban Development budget, as many people cannot afford housing—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman must confine his remarks to the question of the privileges of the House.

Mr. DOGGETT. I would do nothing else, Mr. Speaker.

And this particular example shows how the proceedings of the House

would be impaired if the only aspect of the budget that increases HUD is one from which Mr. Trump personally benefits, which is what the Post is reporting, and so we need the returns in order to see that.

Like so many other broken promises, we will not get these returns voluntarily. I believe that the House needs to act. Unlike Sally Yates, unlike the U.S. attorney in New York, and unlike James Comey, he can't fire us, and we don't have to be accessories to a cover-up.

I call on this House to protect the integrity of its proceedings, including the integrity of our unique constitutional authority over tax legislation, by declaring that this resolution is in order. This resolution simply calls on the House to secure the tax return and return information on Mr. Trump and his businesses. It further declares that, in order to preserve the integrity of the House, we will not be taking up tax reform legislation, which we certainly need to take up, and we have ideas to offer and to cooperate in trying to see reform of our taxes, but not do it until we have had an opportunity to review thoroughly Mr. Trump's tax returns and return information to ascertain how he may personally benefit.

I would hope that the Speaker, considering my comments, as well as those that I know Mr. PASCRELL wants to offer, would be ruling that we can have that straight up-and-down vote, no hiding behind a rock, let us look under the rock.

I appreciate the Speaker giving me this opportunity to emphasize the very significant importance of this question to the integrity of the House and to the future of the American people and our democracy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does any other Member wish to be heard on the question of order?

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, how are you today?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from New Jersey wish to be heard on the question of order?

Mr. PASCRELL. Yes, I do, thank you.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I think we need to define a few terms here what we are talking about. We are talking about tax returns. What does that mean? It doesn't mean the 1040. It doesn't mean the 278.

In this particular case, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about close to 12,000 pages of tax returns; that is what we are talking about, the integrity of the House, the integrity of myself and you. I know you are a person of integrity. And I say it like it is, so I am not blowing smoke. That is why this is important.

So a 2-page, 3-page 1040 doesn't mean anything to what we are doing; 12,000 pages, just on this President's tax returns.

The stunning potential conflicts of interest are piling up. Every day, we

all read about it. The President was told by the Ethics Commission, divest yourself of your holdings. That doesn't mean you give your money away, your assets away. It means what it says, you divest.

But I think that there is nothing more of a threat to the integrity of our House than ignoring our duties, to provide a check and a balance to the executive branch. To restore the dignity of the House, we must use our authority to request the President's tax returns. Give the American people the transparency that they deserve.

In addition, it is reported that the President's hotel in Washington received \$270,000 from Saudi Arabia when they were here to lobby against the bill allowing families of 9/11 victims to sue the Saudi Government.

Now, last week, the District of Columbia and Maryland filed a lawsuit against the President, arguing that he is violating the anticorruption clauses in the Constitution by allowing his businesses to accept payments from foreign governments and other government entities. We have no way of knowing whether the President or his firms have received Russian income or loans or entered into Russian-linked partnerships. In fact, you are going to read a lot about that this week. There are hearings going on as we speak. A certified letter from paid attorneys does nothing to assuage these concerns.

Two weeks ago, we heard from the former Director of the FBI, James Comey, who confirmed that the President tried to influence him to stop the Russian investigation.

Isn't it great that we live in a body where they can't stop us? The President can't stop us. We can only stop ourselves.

The legislative branch has the responsibility and authority to check the executive branch, and section 6103, you have heard me say that number many times, section 6103 of the Tax Code, which allows for the examination of tax returns—that authority, put in place specifically so Congress could examine conflicts of interest following that scandal which we all know about in 1923.

Nothing could be more of a threat, to me, to the integrity of the House and our Members, than ignoring our duty to fully examine the personal financial entanglements of this President or any President, and particularly those, at this time, which we are reading about, that he may have with the Russian entities and individuals or whether he abused the tax laws of this country.

We have a right to know who our public officials are and what investments they have made, and every member of the executive branch of government—and this was made clear in the decision in 1924, particularly Interior Secretary Fall at that time, to examine his tax records, and that is how people were brought to justice in 1924.

It also protects the privacy of the very taxpayer. And we are having excep-

ptions. We have exceptions to that. Three years ago, we had an exception in the Ways and Means Committee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman have any further argument on whether this resolution constitutes a question of the privileges of the House?

Mr. PASCRELL. Yes, it does constitute a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Then the gentleman will confine his remarks to the question of the privileges of the House.

Mr. PASCRELL. Yes, I can, Mr. Speaker. May I continue?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As long as the gentleman confines his remarks to the question of privilege.

Mr. PASCRELL. Very good. Thank you.

Just let me say this in conclusion: if and when, if and when such conflicts are revealed, I don't want to say to you, my constituents, that we had the power to review the conflicts, but we chose not to. I, for one, do not want my integrity or the integrity of my brothers and sisters on this floor to be demeaned by a shameful failure. To restore the dignity of the House is what this privilege is all about.

I have a question of the Speaker at this particular time, if I may.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may inquire.

Mr. PASCRELL. I think that I would like to present today what Congress should do immediately about the question of privilege before us. May I proceed?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As long as it pertains to the question of privilege.

Mr. PASCRELL. The Chair is good on that answer, Mr. Speaker.

I think that we should do this. I think we should require the President and the Vice President, whomever that will be in the future, for now, and their families, to resolve their conflicts of interest by selling their assets, using a truly independent asset manager.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's remarks are wandering from the question of privilege.

Mr. PASCRELL. I don't believe so, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. You might not believe so, but the Chair does.

Mr. PASCRELL. But I am compelled to follow your direction.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. If the gentleman has no further argument on the question of privilege, the Chair is prepared to rule.

Mr. PASCRELL. Well, my final comment is this: I know you don't take the question of integrity lightly. That is not a joking matter at all. Nor do I take the integrity of the President of the United States lightly. I have an obligation and a responsibility.

As I said on February 1, I will not yield. This is important to all of us, and it is not partisan. Read my letter of February 1.

I thank the Chair for his indulgence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is prepared to rule.

The gentleman from Texas seeks to offer a resolution as a question of the privileges of the House under rule IX.

In evaluating the resolution under rule IX, the Chair must determine whether the resolution affects "the rights of the House collectively, its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings."

The first resolving clause of the resolution offered by the gentleman from Texas seeks tax returns and tax return information of the President and certain of his business entities.

Section 702 of the House Rules and Manual states that "rule IX is concerned not with the privileges of the Congress, as a legislative branch, but only with the privileges of the House, as a House."

As the Chair ruled on March 28, 2017, a resolution offered under rule IX seeking information from actors entirely extramural to the House, such as the President and certain business entities in which the President may be involved, is not uniquely concerned with the privileges of the House, as a House. Accordingly, the resolution offered by the gentleman from Texas does not constitute a question of privilege under rule IX.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I most reluctantly, after the Speaker's careful consideration of this, must appeal the ruling of the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is, Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the House?

MOTION TO TABLE

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Newhouse moves that the appeal be laid on the table.

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

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

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. 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 table will be followed by 5-minute votes on ordering the previous question on House Resolution 392; and on adoption of House Resolution 392, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 227, nays 188, answered "present" 1, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 311]

YEAS—227

Abraham	Babin	Barton
Allen	Bacon	Bergman
Amash	Banks (IN)	Biggs
Amodei	Barletta	Bilirakis
Arrington	Barr	Bishop (MI)

Bishop (UT) Harper
 Black Harris
 Blackburn Hartzler
 Blum Hensarling
 Bost Herrera Beutler
 Brady (TX) Hice, Jody B.
 Brat Higgins (LA)
 Bridenstine Hill
 Brooks (AL) Holding
 Brooks (IN) Hollingsworth
 Buchanan Hudson
 Buck Huizenga
 Bueshon Hultgren
 Budd Hunter
 Burgess Hurd
 Byrne Issa
 Calvert Jenkins (KS)
 Carter (GA) Jenkins (WV)
 Carter (TX) Johnson (LA)
 Chabot Johnson (OH)
 Cheney Jordan
 Coffman Joyce (OH)
 Cole Katko
 Collins (GA) Kelly (MS)
 Collins (NY) Kelly (PA)
 Comer King (IA)
 Conaway King (NY)
 Cook Kinzinger
 Costello (PA) Knight
 Cramer Kustoff (TN)
 Crawford Labrador
 Culberson LaHood
 Curbelo (FL) LaMalfa
 Davidson Lamborn
 Davis, Rodney Lance
 Denham Latta
 Dent Lewis (MN)
 DeSantis LoBiondo
 DesJarlais Loudermilk
 Diaz-Balart Love
 Donovan Lucas
 Duffy Luetkemeyer
 Duncan (SC) MacArthur
 Duncan (TN) Marchant
 Dunn Marino
 Emmer Marshall
 Estes (KS) Massie
 Farenthold Mast
 Faso McCarthy
 Ferguson McCaul
 Fitzpatrick McClintock
 Fleischmann McHenry
 Flores McKinley
 Fortenberry McMorris
 Foxx Rodgers
 Franks (AZ) McSally
 Frelinghuysen Meadows
 Gaetz Meehan
 Gallagher Messer
 Garrett Mitchell
 Gibbs Moolenaar
 Gohmert Mooney (WV)
 Goodlatte Mullin
 Gosar Murphy (PA)
 Gowdy Newhouse
 Granger Noem
 Graves (GA) Nunes
 Graves (LA) Olson
 Graves (MO) Palazzo
 Griffith Palmer
 Grothman Paulsen
 Guthrie Pearce

NAYS—188

Adams Clark (MA)
 Aguilar Clarke (NY)
 Barragan Clay
 Bass Cleaver
 Beatty Clyburn
 Bera Cohen
 Beyer Connolly
 Bishop (GA) Conyers
 Blumenauer Cooper
 Blunt Rochester Correa
 Bonamici Costa
 Boyle, Brendan Courtney
 F. Crist
 Brady (PA) Crowley
 Brown (MD) Cuellar
 Brownley (CA) Davis (CA)
 Bustos Davis, Danny
 Butterfield DeFazio
 Capuano DeGette
 Carabajal Delaney
 Cárdenas DeLauro
 Carson (IN) DelBene
 Cartwright Heck
 Demings
 Castor (FL) DeSaulnier
 Castro (TX) Deutch
 Chu, Judy Dingell
 Cicilline Doggett

Jeffries McGovern
 Johnson (GA) McNeerney
 Johnson, E. B. Meeks
 Jones Meng
 Kaptur Moore
 Keating Moulton
 Kelly (IL) Murphy (FL)
 Kennedy Nadler
 Khanna Neal
 Kihuen Nolan
 Kildee Norcross
 Kilmer O'Halleran
 Kind O'Rourke
 Krishnamoorthi Pallone
 Kuster (NH) Panetta
 Langevin Pascrell
 Larson (CT) Payne
 Lawrence Pelosi
 Lawson (FL) Perlmutter
 Lee Peters
 Levin Peterson
 Lewis (GA) Pingree
 Lieu, Ted Pocan
 Lipinski Polis
 Loeb sack Price (NC)
 Lofgren Quigley
 Lowenthal Raskin
 Loney Rice (NY)
 Lujan Grisham, Richmond
 M. Rosen
 Lujan, Ben Ray Roybal-Allard
 Lynch Ruiz
 Maloney, Sean Ruppertsberger
 Shuster Rush
 Maloney, Sean Ryan (OH)
 Matsui Sánchez
 McCollum Sarbanes
 McEachin Schakowsky

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1
 Sanford
 NOT VOTING—14

Aderholt Higgins (NY)
 Chaffetz Johnson, Sam
 Comstock Larsen (WA)
 Cummings Long
 Gabbard Napolitano

□ 1419

Mr. ESPAILLAT changed his vote from "yea" to "nay."

So the motion to table was agreed to. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 19, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of the Certificate of Election received from the Honorable Corey Stapleton, Secretary of State of Montana, indicating that, at the Special Election held on May 25, 2017, the Honorable Greg Gianforte was duly elected Representative in Congress for the At-Large Congressional District, State of Montana.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,
KAREN L. HAAS, Clerk.

Enclosure.

THE STATE OF MONTANA
CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION

I, Steve Bullock, Governor of the State of Montana, hereby certify that at the Special Election held on the 25th day of May 2017, Greg Gianforte was elected to the office of United States Representative, to serve for the balance of an unexpired term that commenced on January 3, 2017. Said candidate received the highest number of votes cast, as appears from the official canvass of returns of the Special Election.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed the Great Seal of the State of Montana this 15th day of June 2017.

STEVE BULLOCK, Governor.
ATTEST:
COREY STAPLETON,
Secretary of State.
[State Seal Affixed]

SWEARING IN OF THE HONORABLE GREG GIANFORTE, OF MONTANA, AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER. Will Representative-elect GIANFORTE present himself in the well.

All Members will rise and the Representative-elect will please raise his right hand.

Mr. GIANFORTE appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter, so help you God.

The SPEAKER. Congratulations, you are now a Member of the 115th Congress.

WELCOMING THE HONORABLE GREG GIANFORTE TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, GREG GIANFORTE is a family man and a businessman. He has been a husband for 29 years, and he is a father of four. He is a founder with his wife, Susan, of RightNow Technologies, which employs over 500 fellow Montanans.

It is good to have another businessowner in this House, somebody who knows the way the economy works, who has created jobs, and who cares about his local community.

Now, Montana may only send one Member to this body, but out West, it is not about how many of you there are, it is about how much you do.

GREG is a doer, and we are happy to have him here.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE), who is the dean of Montana.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank you and Majority Leader MCCARTHY.

I am humbled and honored to have been elected by the people of Montana to represent them here in this House.

I am joined today by my wife, Susan, who is in the gallery. We have been married 29 years. We have four grown children. Two of them are with us today, along with our daughter-in-law. We raised them hunting, fishing, and hiking on the great public lands in Montana.

I am a business guy and an electrical engineer. I am trained to solve hard problems, not to argue about them, just to get things done.

Susan and I did start a computer software company in our home over 20 years ago in Bozeman, Montana, and it grew to over 500 employees there and became one of the State's largest employers.

I am Montana's lone voice here in this House, sent by the people to do the work of the people. The MT comes before the R or the D after my name. I promised the people of Montana that I

would come back and drain the swamp. That is why today three of my first actions are bills: no balanced budget, no pay; term limits; and a ban on lobbying by Members of Congress after being out of office.

We need to bring accountability to Washington, D.C.

I feel a deep sense of obligation to serve, and I look forward to being a strong voice for all of Montana.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the administration of the oath to the gentleman from Montana, the whole number of the House is 432.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1873, ELECTRICITY RELIABILITY AND FOREST PROTECTION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1654, WATER SUPPLY PERMITTING COORDINATION ACT

The SPEAKER. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 392) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1873) to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1654) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 229, nays 186, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 312]

YEAS—229

Abraham	Biggs	Buchanan
Allen	Bilirakis	Buck
Amash	Bishop (MI)	Bucshon
Amodei	Bishop (UT)	Budd
Arrington	Black	Burgess
Babin	Blackburn	Byrne
Bacon	Bost	Calvert
Banks (IN)	Brady (TX)	Carter (GA)
Barletta	Brat	Carter (TX)
Barr	Bridenstine	Chabot
Barton	Brooks (AL)	Cheney
Bergman	Brooks (IN)	Coffman

Cole	Hurd
Collins (GA)	Issa
Collins (NY)	Jenkins (KS)
Comer	Jenkins (WV)
Conaway	Johnson (LA)
Cook	Johnson (OH)
Costello (PA)	Jordan
Cramer	Joyce (OH)
Crawford	Katko
Culberson	Labrador
Curbelo (FL)	Kelly (MS)
Davidson	Kelly (PA)
Davis, Rodney	King (IA)
Denham	King (NY)
Dent	Kinzinger
DeSantis	Knight
DesJarlais	Kustoff (TN)
Diaz-Balart	LaHood
Donovan	LaMalfa
Duffy	Lamborn
Duncan (SC)	Lance
Duncan (TN)	Latta
Dunn	Lewis (MN)
Emmer	LoBiondo
Estes (KS)	Loudermilk
Farenthold	Love
Faso	Lucas
Ferguson	Luetkemeyer
Fitzpatrick	MacArthur
Fleischmann	Marchant
Flores	Marino
Fortenberry	Marshall
Fox	Massie
Franks (AZ)	Mast
Frelinghuysen	McCarthy
Gaetz	McCaul
Gallagher	McClintock
Garrett	McHenry
Gianforte	McKinley
Gibbs	McMorris
Gohmert	Rodgers
Goodlatte	McSally
Gosar	Meadows
Gowdy	Meehan
Granger	Messer
Graves (GA)	Mitchell
Graves (LA)	Moolenaar
Graves (MO)	Mooney (WV)
Griffith	Mullin
Grothman	Murphy (PA)
Guthrie	Newhouse
Harper	Noem
Harris	Nunes
Hartzler	Olson
Hensarling	Palazzo
Herrera Beutler	Palmer
Hice, Jody B.	Paulsen
Higgins (LA)	Pearce
Hill	Perry
Holding	Pittenger
Hollingsworth	Poe (TX)
Hudson	Poliquin
Huizenga	Poliquin
Hultgren	Posey
Hunter	Ratcliffe
	Reed

NAYS—186

Adams	Cohen
Aguilar	Connolly
Barragán	Conyers
Bass	Cooper
Beatty	Correa
Bera	Costa
Beyer	Courtney
Bishop (GA)	Crist
Blumenauer	Crowley
Blunt Rochester	Cuellar
Bonamici	Davis (CA)
Boyle, Brendan F.	Davis, Danny
Brady (PA)	DeFazio
Brown (MD)	DeGette
Brownley (CA)	Delaney
Bustos	DeLauro
Butterfield	DeBene
Capuano	Demings
Carbajal	DeSaunier
Cárdenas	Deutch
Carson (IN)	Dingell
Cartwright	Dogett
Castor (FL)	Doyle, Michael F.
Castro (TX)	Ellison
Chu, Judy	Engel
Cicilline	Eshoo
Clark (MA)	Españillat
Clarke (NY)	Esty (CT)
Clay	Evans
Cleaver	Foster
Clyburn	Frankel (FL)

Reichert	Larson (CT)
Renacci	Lawrence
Rice (SC)	Lawson (FL)
Roby	Lee
Roe (TN)	Levin
Rogers (AL)	Lewis (GA)
Rogers (KY)	Lieu, Ted
Rohrabacher	Lipinski
Rokita	Loeback
Rooney, Francis	Lofgren
Rooney, Thomas J.	Lowenthal
Ros-Lehtinen	Lowey
Roskam	Lujan Grisham, M.
Ross	Luján, Ben Ray
Rothfus	Lynch
Rouzer	Maloney,
Royce (CA)	Carolyn B.
Russell	Maloney, Sean
Rutherford	Matsui
Sanford	McCollum
Schweikert	McEachin
Scott, Austin	McGovern
Sensenbrenner	McNerney
Sessions	Meeks
Shimkus	Meng
Shuster	Moore
Simpson	Moulton
Smith (MO)	Murphy (FL)
Smith (NJ)	Nadler
Smith (TX)	Neal
Smucker	Nolan
Stefanik	
Stewart	Aderholt
Stivers	Blum
Taylor	Chaffetz
Tenney	Chaffetz
Thompson (PA)	Comstock
Thornberry	Cummings
Tiberi	Gabbard
Tipton	
Trott	
Turner	
Upton	
Valadao	
Wagner	
Walberg	
Walden	
Walker	
Walorski	
Walters, Mimi	
Webster (FL)	
Wenstrup	
Westerman	
Williams	
Wilson (SC)	
Wittman	
Womack	
Woodall	
Yoder	
Yoho	
Young (AK)	
Young (IA)	
Zeldin	

Norcross	Serrano
O'Halleran	Sewell (AL)
O'Rourke	Shea-Porter
Pallone	Sherman
Panetta	Sinema
Pascrell	Sires
Payne	Slaughter
Pelosi	Smith (WA)
Perlmutter	Soto
Peters	Speier
Peterson	Suozzi
Pingree	Swalwell (CA)
Pocan	Takano
Polis	Thompson (CA)
Price (NC)	Thompson (MS)
Quigley	Titus
Raskin	Tonko
Rice (NY)	Torres
Richmond	Tsongas
Rosen	Vargas
Roybal-Allard	Veasey
Ruiz	Vela
Ruppersberger	Velázquez
Rush	Visclosky
Ryan (OH)	Walz
Sánchez	Wasserman
Sarbanes	Schultz
Schakowsky	Schiff
Schiff	Schneider
Schneider	Schrader
Scott (VA)	Scott (VA)
	Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—16

Green, Gene	Scalise
Higgins (NY)	Scott, David
Johnson, Sam	Weber (TX)
Larsen (WA)	Wilson (FL)
Long	
Napolitano	

□ 1434

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia). 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. POLIS. 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 230, noes 185, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 313]

AYES—230

Abraham	Calvert	Estes (KS)
Allen	Carter (GA)	Farenthold
Amash	Carter (TX)	Faso
Amodei	Chabot	Ferguson
Arrington	Cheney	Fitzpatrick
Babin	Coffman	Fleischmann
Bacon	Cole	Flores
Banks (IN)	Collins (GA)	Fortenberry
Barletta	Collins (NY)	Fox
Barr	Comer	Franks (AZ)
Barton	Conaway	Frelinghuysen
Bergman	Cook	Gaetz
Biggs	Costello (PA)	Gallagher
Bilirakis	Cramer	Garrett
Bishop (MI)	Crawford	Gianforte
Bishop (UT)	Culberson	Gibbs
Black	Curbelo (FL)	Gohmert
Blackburn	Davidson	Goodlatte
Bost	Davis, Rodney	Gosar
Brady (TX)	Denham	Gowdy
Brat	Dent	Graves (GA)
Bridenstine	DeSantis	Graves (LA)
Brooks (AL)	DesJarlais	Graves (MO)
Brooks (IN)	Diaz-Balart	Griffith
Buchanan	Donovan	Grothman
Buck	Duffy	Guthrie
Bucshon	Duncan (SC)	Harper
Budd	Duncan (TN)	Harris
Burgess	Dunn	Hartzler
Byrne	Emmer	Hensarling

Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock

McHenry
McKinley
McMorris
Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Newhouse
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas
J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford

NOES—185

Adams
Aguilar
Barragan
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan
F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DeBene

Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael
F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Español
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Lawrence

Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowe
Lujan Grisham,
M.
Lujan, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney
Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascarell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond

Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)

Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swailwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres

Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—16

Aderholt
Blum
Chaffetz
Comstock
Cummings
Gabbard

Granger
Higgins (NY)
Johnson, Sam
Larsen (WA)
Long
Meehan

Napolitano
Scalise
Weber (TX)
Wilson (FL)

□ 1442

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.

Stated for:

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 313. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during roll call votes No. 311, No. 312, and No. 313 due to my spouse's health situation in California. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on the Motion to Table the Appeal of the Ruling of the Chair. I would have also voted "nay" on the Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule providing for consideration of both H.R. 1873 and H.R. 1654. I would have also voted "nay" on H. Res. 392—Rule providing for both H.R. 1873—Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act and H.R. 1654—Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act.

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.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

FIXING INTERNAL RESPONSE TO MISCONDUCT ACT

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2131) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department of Homeland Security to improve consistency regarding discipline and adverse actions in the Department's workforce, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2131

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 "Fixing Internal Response to Misconduct Act" or the "DHS FIRM Act".

SEC. 2. DHS POLICY ON DISCIPLINE AND ADVERSE ACTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 704 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 344) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (9), by striking "and" at the end;

(B) in paragraph (10), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(1) implement a Department-wide policy related to discipline and adverse actions described in subsection (e).";

(2) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f); and

(3) by inserting after subsection (d) the following new subsection:

"(e) POLICY ON DISCIPLINE AND ADVERSE ACTIONS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Chief Human Capital Officer, in accordance with any established Department-wide policy that deals with discipline and adverse actions, shall provide—

"(A) guidance to the senior human resources official overseeing discipline and adverse actions for headquarters personnel and non-component entities, as identified by the Chief Human Capital Officer, and relevant component heads regarding informing the public about how to report employee misconduct;

"(B) guidance on how Department employees should report employee misconduct;

"(C) guidance on the type, quantity, and frequency of data regarding discipline and adverse actions to be submitted to the Chief Human Capital Officer by the senior human resources official overseeing discipline and adverse actions for headquarters personnel and non-component entities, as identified by the Chief Human Capital Officer and component heads for the purposes of paragraph (3)(C);

"(D) guidance on how to implement any such Department-wide policy in a manner that promotes greater uniformity and transparency in the administration of such policy across the Department; and

"(E) guidance and appropriate training on prohibited personnel practices, employee rights, and procedures and processes related to such.

"(2) TABLE OF OFFENSES AND PENALTIES.—

"(A) PRE-EXISTING TABLES.—If a table of offenses and penalties exists for a component of the Department as of the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Chief Human Capital Officer shall review and, if appropriate, approve such table and any changes to such table made after such date of enactment. In cases in which such tables do not comply with Department policy, the Chief Human Capital Officer shall instruct component heads on corrective measures to be taken in order to achieve such compliance.

"(B) NEW COMPONENT TABLES.—If a table of offenses and penalties does not exist for a component of the Department as of the date of enactment of this subsection, a component head may, in coordination with the Chief Human Capital Officer, develop a table of offenses and penalties to be used by such component. The Chief Human Capital Officer shall review and, if appropriate, approve such table and any changes to such table made after such date of enactment. In cases in which such tables or changes do not comply with Department policy, the Chief Human Capital Officer shall instruct the component head on corrective measures to

be taken in order to achieve such compliance.

“(3) COMPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES.—Component heads shall comply with Department-wide policy (including guidance relating to such) regarding discipline and adverse actions for the Department’s workforce, including—

“(A) providing any current table of offenses and penalties or future changes to a component’s table to the Chief Human Capital Officer for review in accordance with paragraph (2)(A);

“(B) providing any new table of offenses and penalties or future changes to a component’s table to the Chief Human Capital Officer for review in accordance with paragraph (2)(B); and

“(C) providing to the Chief Human Capital Officer any data regarding discipline and adverse actions in accordance with paragraph (1)(C).

“(4) OVERSIGHT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Chief Human Capital Officer shall implement a process to oversee component compliance with any established Department-wide policy regarding discipline and adverse actions referred to in paragraph (1), including—

“(i) the degree to which components are complying with such policy; and

“(ii) at a minimum, each fiscal year, a review of component adjudication of misconduct data to—

“(I) ensure consistent adherence to such policy and any Department-wide table of offenses and penalties or any component-specific table of offenses and penalties approved by the Chief Human Capital Officer pursuant to paragraph (2); and

“(II) determine whether employee training regarding such misconduct policy or adjustment in such misconduct policy is appropriate.

“(B) WORKING GROUPS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Chief Human Capital Officer may establish working groups, as necessary, to address employee misconduct within the Department. If the Chief Human Capital Officer establishes such a working group, the Chief Human Capital Officer shall specify a timeframe for the completion of such group’s work.

“(ii) FUNCTION.—A working group established pursuant to clause (i) shall seek to identify any trends in misconduct referred to in such subparagraph, review component processes for addressing misconduct, and, where appropriate, develop possible alternate strategies to address such misconduct.

“(iii) PARTICIPATION.—If a working group is established pursuant to clause (i), the relevant component head shall participate in such working group and shall consider implementing, as appropriate, any recommendations issued by such working group.

“(iv) FOLLOW-UP REVIEWS.—The Chief Human Capital Officer shall conduct annual, or on a more frequent basis as determined by the Chief Human Capital Officer, follow-up reviews of components regarding implementation of working group recommendations. In consultation with the Chief Human Capital Officer, the Secretary may request the Inspector General of the Department to investigate any concerns identified through the oversight process under this subsection that components have not addressed.”

(b) REVIEW.—Not later than 60 days after the development of the oversight process required under subsection (e) of section 704 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 344) (as added by subsection (a) of this section), the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department of Homeland Security shall provide to the Committee on Homeland Security

of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate information on such oversight process, including component compliance with any policy regarding discipline and adverse actions, data collection efforts, and information on the development of any working groups under such subsection (e).

(c) PROHIBITION ON NEW FUNDING.—No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

□ 1445

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about my bill, H.R. 2131, the Fixing Internal Response to Misconduct Act, or the Department of Homeland Security FIRM Act, for short.

Mr. Speaker, employee misconduct and unethical behavior at any Federal agency can disrupt the daily operations of our government; however, these activities can have greater national security implications at Federal agencies like the Department of Homeland Security due to its intrinsic mission. Incidents of employee misconduct within DHS do not only hinder the public’s confidence in the Department, but also jeopardize the day-to-day working environment for Department of Homeland Security employees.

Since its inception, DHS has faced significant obstacles consolidating 22 preexisting component agencies, including instilling common, across-the-board policies. Time and again, the DHS Office of Inspector General has criticized the Department’s lack of consistent policies.

Until recently, the Department was operating without an across-the-board overarching misconduct policy, and headquarters and a major component were operating without the assistance of a Table of Offenses and Penalties.

Issued in November 2016, the Department’s discipline and adverse actions program directive put in place a Departmentwide policy to provide guidance in the adjudication and management of disciplinary matters.

My bill, H.R. 2131, will strengthen and support this policy by granting greater oversight to the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department, allowing the CHCO to identify trends and causes of persistent employee misconduct and to establish working groups to address such misconduct.

H.R. 2131 promotes greater consistency in the use of discipline and adverse actions and improves collaboration between the CHCO components and human resources officials regarding the improvement of employee conduct at the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill to help ensure any misconduct and unethical behavior at DHS is properly dealt with.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM,

Washington, DC, June 21, 2017.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,

Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to you concerning the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in matters being considered in H.R. 2131, the DHS Fixing Internal Response to Misconduct (FIRM) Act.

Our committee recognizes the importance of H.R. 2131 and the need for the legislation to move expeditiously. Therefore, while we have identified matters of jurisdictional interest to the Oversight Committee in the bill, I do not intend to request a sequential referral. This, of course, is conditional on our mutual understanding that nothing in this legislation or my decision to forego a sequential referral waives, reduces or otherwise affects the jurisdiction of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is currently investigating disciplinary processes and procedures, including disparate tables of penalties, across the federal government. Any government-wide table of penalties created by legislation stemming from the Oversight Committee shall supersede the tables established under this legislation. I look forward to working with you to ensure a uniform, consistent, and effective disciplinary process for federal employees across the civil service.

The Oversight Committee has historically been a strong defender of the Inspector General community. It is our understanding that nothing in this legislation creates a negative inference related to the authority of other Inspectors General under the Inspector General Act of 1978 at other departments and agencies within the federal government. I appreciate your willingness to work together to ensure that all Inspectors General are given the authority needed to accomplish their important mission.

I ask that a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest will be included in the committee report for H.R. 2131 and as part of the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill by the House. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform also asks that you support our request to be conferees on the provisions over which we have jurisdiction during any House-Senate conference.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

TREY GOWDY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, June 21, 2017.

Hon. TREY GOWDY,
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOWDY: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2131, the "Fixing Internal Response to Misconduct Act." I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Oversight and Government will forego seeking a sequential referral of the bill.

The Committee on Homeland Security concurs with the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration on this bill at this time, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform does not waive any jurisdiction it may have over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future.

Additionally, the Committee expects that any table of offenses or penalties created by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management for government-wide application shall supersede any table created at any component of the Department, including any Department-wide guidance on such tables, and shall be used at all entities of the Department, although the Department or its components may provide an additional table of offenses and penalties subject to the requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (B) entitled "Pre-Existing Tables" and "New Component Tables" respectively, for offenses not listed in the government-wide table.

Furthermore, this legislation authorizes the Inspector General of the Department, within their existing authorities under the Inspector General Act of 1978, to issue management alerts regarding misconduct to the Secretary. The Committee does not intend to create any negative inference related to the authority of other Inspector Generals with this provision. The Committee intends to reinforce authorities already existing in the Inspector General Act of 1978. The Committee strongly opposes the citation of this provision to cast any inference on Inspector Generals at other departments and agencies that would negatively impact their ability to accomplish their missions.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the report or in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House floor. I thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2131, the DHS FIRM Act, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2131, or the DHS FIRM Act, seeks to ensure greater consistency and transparency in how discipline is administered across the Department of Homeland Security. Discipline administered in a fair and equitable manner has a huge implication on job satisfaction.

Since 2003, DHS, a diverse, multimission Federal Department, has struggled with low morale. At the end of the prior administration, there was evidence that the DHS workforce was starting to feel a more fair and cooper-

ative and supportive DHS. In 2016, the Office of Personnel Management reported a 3 percent increase in the annual Employee Viewpoint Survey, which indicated that DHS supported fairness and protection of employees from arbitrary action.

While the OPM survey results are positive indicators, more must be done by the current DHS leadership. This bill seeks to give the Department's Chief Human Capital Officer a more prominent role in ensuring that discipline is handled in an equitable and fair manner. Specifically, this bill charges the Chief Human Capital Officer with oversight of how employee misconduct is managed across all components.

To ensure fairness and transparency, the bill requires each component to accomplish a matrix of offenses and penalties that is tailored to the needs of that organization, and upon approval by the Department's Chief Human Capital Officer, such information to be shared with the workforce.

While it is essential that senior-level human capital personnel at DHS have a structure to address discipline, it is equally important that such discipline be administered in a fair and equitable manner. This is what this bill actually does.

Mr. Speaker, the implementation of a Departmentwide discipline and adverse action policy should improve employer and employee relations and communication. Enacting this legislation will send a message of support for the Department's workforce who, every day, do things big and small to guard our country against terrorists and other bad actors. These Department personnel are entrusted with the security of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 2131, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his wisdom and counsel.

I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2131, as amended.

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 Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2131, 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.

DHS ACQUISITION REVIEW BOARD ACT OF 2017

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1282) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish Acquisition Review Boards in the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1282

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 "DHS Acquisition Review Board Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. ACQUISITION REVIEW BOARD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle D of title VIII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 391 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 836. ACQUISITION REVIEW BOARD.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish an Acquisition Review Board (in this section referred to as the 'Board') to—

"(1) strengthen accountability and uniformity within the Department acquisition review process;

"(2) review major acquisition programs; and

"(3) review the use of best practices.

"(b) COMPOSITION.—The Under Secretary for Management shall serve as chair of the Board. The Secretary shall also ensure participation by other relevant Department officials, including at least two component heads or their designees, as permanent members of the Board.

"(c) MEETINGS.—The Board shall meet regularly for purposes of ensuring all acquisitions processes proceed in a timely fashion to achieve mission readiness. The Board shall convene at the Secretary's discretion and at any time—

"(1) a major acquisition program—

"(A) requires authorization to proceed from one acquisition decision event to another throughout the acquisition life cycle;

"(B) is in breach of its approved requirements; or

"(C) requires additional review, as determined by the Under Secretary for Management; or

"(2) a non-major acquisition program requires review, as determined by the Under Secretary for Management.

"(d) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

"(1) Determine whether a proposed acquisition has met the requirements of key phases of the acquisition life cycle framework and is able to proceed to the next phase and eventual full production and deployment.

"(2) Oversee whether a proposed acquisition's business strategy, resources, management, and accountability is executable and is aligned to strategic initiatives.

"(3) Support the person with acquisition decision authority for an acquisition in determining the appropriate direction for such acquisition at key acquisition decision events.

"(4) Conduct systematic reviews of acquisitions to ensure that such acquisitions are progressing in compliance with the approved documents for their current acquisition phases.

"(5) Review the acquisition documents of each major acquisition program, including the acquisition program baseline and documentation reflecting consideration of trade-offs among cost, schedule, and performance objectives, to ensure the reliability of underlying data.

"(6) Ensure that practices are adopted and implemented to require consideration of trade-offs among cost, schedule, and performance objectives as part of the process for developing requirements for major acquisition programs prior to the initiation of the second acquisition decision event, including, at a minimum, the following practices:

"(A) Department officials responsible for acquisition, budget, and cost estimating

functions are provided with the appropriate opportunity to develop estimates and raise cost and schedule matters before performance objectives are established for capabilities when feasible.

“(B) Full consideration is given to possible trade-offs among cost, schedule, and performance objectives for each alternative.

“(e) ACQUISITION PROGRAM BASELINE REPORT REQUIREMENT.—If the person exercising acquisition decision authority over a major acquisition program approves such program to proceed into the planning phase before such program has a Department-approved acquisition program baseline, the Under Secretary for Management shall create and approve an acquisition program baseline report regarding such approval, and the Secretary shall—

“(1) within seven days after an acquisition decision memorandum is signed, notify in writing the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate of such decision; and

“(2) within 60 days after the acquisition decision memorandum is signed, submit to such committees a report stating the rationale for such decision and a plan of action to require an acquisition program baseline for such program.

“(f) REPORT.—The Under Secretary for Management shall provide information to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate on an annual basis through fiscal year 2022 on the activities of the Board for the prior fiscal year that includes information relating to the following:

“(1) For each meeting of the Board, any acquisition decision memoranda.

“(2) Results of the systematic reviews conducted pursuant to paragraph (4) of subsection (d).

“(3) Results of acquisition document reviews required pursuant to paragraph (5) of subsection (d).

“(4) Activities to ensure that practices are adopted and implemented throughout the Department pursuant to paragraph (6) of subsection (d).

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) ACQUISITION.—The term ‘acquisition’ has the meaning given such term in section 131 of title 41, United States Code.

“(2) ACQUISITION DECISION AUTHORITY.—The term ‘acquisition decision authority’ means the authority, held by the Secretary acting through the Deputy Secretary or Under Secretary for Management to—

“(A) ensure compliance with Federal law, the Federal Acquisition Regulation, and Department acquisition management directives;

“(B) review (including approving, pausing, modifying, or cancelling) an acquisition program through the life cycle of such program;

“(C) ensure that acquisition program managers have the resources necessary to successfully execute an approved acquisition program;

“(D) ensure good acquisition program management of cost, schedule, risk, and system performance of the acquisition program at issue, including assessing acquisition program baseline breaches and directing any corrective action for such breaches; and

“(E) ensure that acquisition program managers, on an ongoing basis, monitor cost, schedule, and performance against established baselines and use tools to assess risks to an acquisition program at all phases of the life cycle of such program to avoid and mitigate acquisition program baseline breaches.

“(3) ACQUISITION DECISION EVENT.—The term ‘acquisition decision event’, with respect to an acquisition program, means a predetermined point within each of the acquisition phases at which the acquisition decision authority determines whether such acquisition program shall proceed to the next acquisition phase.

“(4) ACQUISITION DECISION MEMORANDUM.—The term ‘acquisition decision memorandum’, with respect to an acquisition, means the official acquisition decision event record that includes a documented record of decisions, exit criteria, and assigned actions for such acquisition, as determined by the person exercising acquisition decision authority for such acquisition.

“(5) ACQUISITION PROGRAM.—The term ‘acquisition program’ means the process by which the Department acquires, with any appropriated amounts, by contract for purchase or lease, property or services (including construction) that support the missions and goals of the Department.

“(6) ACQUISITION PROGRAM BASELINE.—The term ‘acquisition program baseline’, with respect to an acquisition program, means a summary of the cost, schedule, and performance parameters, expressed in standard, measurable, quantitative terms, which must be met in order to accomplish the goals of such program.

“(7) BEST PRACTICES.—The term ‘best practices’, with respect to acquisition, means a knowledge-based approach to capability development that includes—

“(A) identifying and validating needs;

“(B) assessing alternatives to select the most appropriate solution;

“(C) clearly establishing well-defined requirements;

“(D) developing realistic cost assessments and schedules;

“(E) securing stable funding that matches resources to requirements;

“(F) demonstrating technology, design, and manufacturing maturity;

“(G) using milestones and exit criteria or specific accomplishments that demonstrate progress;

“(H) adopting and executing standardized processes with known success across programs;

“(I) establishing an adequate workforce that is qualified and sufficient to perform necessary functions; and

“(J) integrating the capabilities described in subparagraphs (A) through (I) into the Department’s mission and business operations.

“(8) MAJOR ACQUISITION PROGRAM.—The term ‘major acquisition program’ means a Department acquisition program that is estimated by the Secretary to require an eventual total expenditure of at least \$300,000,000 (based on fiscal year 2017 constant dollars) over its life cycle cost.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 101 et seq.) is further amended by adding after the item relating to section 835 the following new item:

“Sec. 836. Acquisition Review Board.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GARRETT) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to implore my colleagues to join in supporting our bill, H.R. 1282, the DHS Acquisition Review Board Act of 2017. This legislation provides commonsense reform and saves the taxpayers’ dollars.

The Government Accountability Office and the DHS Office of Inspector General have reported the longstanding challenges the Department of Homeland Security faces in managing its major acquisition programs. These programs are those costing more than \$300 million, which cost the Department about \$7 billion in 2016 alone.

Since the Department’s creation, the GAO has placed DHS management functions, including acquisition management, on its high-risk list of programs that are highly susceptible to fraud, waste, and abuse. Mismanagement is present or in need of transformation, and the DHS still struggles to ensure that major acquisition programs stay on budget, are delivered on schedule, and provide capabilities as originally intended.

Homeland Security is a unique committee insofar as it affords the opportunity for folks on both sides of the aisle to work in a bipartisan manner for things that we can all concede are in the best interest of our Nation.

A recent GAO report found that 9 of 26 major acquisition programs experienced cost growth or schedule slips. The amount of cost overruns totaled nearly \$1 billion and are scheduled to slip by an average of 6 months per program. The GAO also found that half of the major acquisition programs it reviewed deployed capabilities before meeting all key performance parameters, which are the most important requirements a system must meet in order to do the jobs that they are intended to do.

It is unacceptable for waste and dysfunction to continue, and it is imperative that the DHS take acquisition management seriously. This bill makes that the case.

We must provide strong accountability mechanisms to ensure major acquisition programs with challenges are caught up, found early, and that solutions are quickly implemented.

This bill ensures that DHS provides that accountability and consistency needed to manage major components, acquisition programs, et cetera, by authorizing the Secretary to establish an Acquisition Review Board. The Acquisition Review Board would then strengthen the accountability and uniformity in DHS’ acquisition process, review major programs, and evaluate the use of best practices.

This bill essentially codifies the already existing Acquisition Review Board to ensure that that board continues and has the oversight authority

it needs under law to make sure that the dollars that we take from the taxpayers are sufficiently and adequately managed and not wasted.

The Acquisition Review Board would be chaired by the Under Secretary for Management and would require at least two component heads or their designees to be permanent members. This would ensure participation from all DHS components.

The Board would be required to meet regularly and would be responsible to determine if a proposed acquisition has met planning requirements needed to proceed to production and deployment, oversee major acquisitions as a business strategy, and review programs in a cost benefit analysis format to determine performance objectives and ensure that our dollars are well spent.

Mr. Speaker, a recent news story pointed out that nine individuals on the planet Earth control as much wealth as 50 percent of the population of the planet Earth. That means that these nine people control as much wealth as 3.5 billion people. And yet, Mr. Speaker, if you were to take the amalgamated wealth of those nine individuals and add it to those 3.5 billion and apply it to the United States' national debt, we could pay off a mere 9.4 percent.

Given that our national debt is almost \$20 trillion dollars and rising, it is imperative that we take this bipartisan step to ensure that our homeland is secured but that the dollars spent doing so are spent effectively, efficiently, and with good stewardship. This legislation helps to ensure that tax dollars are safeguarded, but it also helps to ensure that DHS personnel receive the tools they need to keep us safe.

Mr. Speaker, I implore and urge my colleagues on each side of the aisle to join in this bipartisan legislation to ensure that our tax dollars are well shepherded but that our Nation is as secure as can be possible.

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1282, the DHS Acquisition Review Board Act of 2017, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in recent years, the Department of Homeland Security has strengthened the management of its major acquisition programs, which historically has been weak.

H.R. 1282 authorizes the key mechanisms from the previous administration to ensure acquisitions valued at more than \$300 million, which account for over \$7 billion of DHS' annual budget, receive ongoing scrutiny—let me repeat, receive ongoing scrutiny.

Since 2008, the Acquisition Review Board has brought leaders together from across the Department to validate foundational acquisition documents such as cost and schedule estimates and performance requirements. The Department has had to learn the hard

way about the importance of adhering to its acquisition best practices, including the establishment of realistic requirements in cost estimates that take into account the life cycle of costs.

An example is the SBInet program, started in 2006, that was supposed to bring together integration of systems of infrastructure and technology to secure the border. This program was terminated in 2011 only after \$1 billion had been spent. Let me repeat that. This program was terminated in 2011, but only after \$1 billion had been spent.

The acquisition went wrong because CBP bypassed required processes and awarded a multimillion-dollar contract without having laid the foundation to oversee contractor performance, cost controls, and scheduling.

Just last week, the Department was forced to cancel its \$1.5 billion Agile Services contract, or the FLASH contract, due to significant errors and missteps in the procurement process.

Many of us are concerned that, in the Department's haste to deliver the President's campaign promise to build a wall, critical steps in the acquisition process will be short-circuited, leaving Americans with a bill for a bad investment.

□ 1500

At this time, a centralized oversight body for DHS major acquisitions is more important than ever.

This bill provides for the board to convene when a major acquisition program requires authorization to proceed from one decision event to another, or is in breach of its approved requirements, or requires additional review.

Efficiency and effectiveness in the acquisition process is imperative for the DHS mission of procuring goods, services, and supplies in support of its national security efforts. The Committee on Homeland Security unanimously approved this measure earlier this Congress, and similar language was approved by the House in October 2015.

By establishing this board into law and laying out its responsibilities, Congress can ensure that this vital oversight will continue and that DHS will continue to show progress in its management of acquisitions.

I urge passage of this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to my distinguished colleague from California. While we might not agree on all that is appropriate within the purview of the Department, we do agree on being effective stewards of tax dollars, and I am grateful for his comments.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank my colleague from Virginia for bringing forth this most important accountability measure.

This bill enhances the Department's accountability and provides greater acquisition oversight to intercede before programs fail to meet important cost and schedule milestones.

Given DHS's limited budgetary resources and the importance of its mission, it is critical that DHS improves its management of major acquisition programs. Although the Department has made some progress in its major acquisition programs, DHS cannot afford to neglect the day-to-day management of the agency and how it procures essential goods and services.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I, once again, wish to extend my thanks to my colleague from California.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues across the aisle to support this commonsense, bipartisan measure, H.R. 1282, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GARRETT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1282, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish the Acquisition Review Board in the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes".

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ELECTRICITY RELIABILITY AND FOREST PROTECTION ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 392 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1873.

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

□ 1504

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1873) to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and

reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands, with Mr. WOMACK in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEBSTER) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today marks the Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans' first step in advancing an infrastructure agenda that aims to improve our Nation's infrastructure and expedite the development of new infrastructure.

As vice chairman of the subcommittee, chaired by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN), I have already seen a number of bills advance through the committee that, like the bill in front of us today, employ simple, pragmatic solutions to improve our Nation's infrastructure and advance an all-of-the-above energy and water strategy.

The Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act, a bipartisan bill offered by my colleagues, Mr. LAMALFA and Mr. SCHRADER, is about avoiding electricity blackouts, preventing forest fires, and promoting healthy habitat for wildlife on Federal lands.

This bill represents a simple, pragmatic solution to an issue that is born out of a lack of communication and consistency within a Federal agency.

Mr. Chairman, I thank Chairman CONAWAY for agreeing to help expedite consideration of this bill today.

I commend my colleagues, Mr. LAMALFA from California and Mr. SCHRADER from Oregon, for bringing up this bipartisan, commonsense piece of legislation.

I urge my House colleagues to support this bipartisan bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, May 19, 2017.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing concerning H.R. 1873, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act. It is my understanding that, on April 27, 2017, the Committee on Natural Resources ordered the bill reported with amendments.

This legislation contains provisions within the Committee on Agriculture's Rule X jurisdiction. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and in order to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Agriculture will forego action on the bill. This is being done on the basis of our mutual understanding that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to

any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

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 Committee Report and in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, May 22, 2017.

Hon. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Wash-
ington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On April 27, 2017, the Committee on Natural Resources ordered reported as amended H.R. 1873, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act, by a bipartisan roll call vote of 24 to 14. The bill was referred primarily to the Committee on Natural Resources, with an additional referral to the Committee on Agriculture.

I ask that you allow the Committee on Agriculture to be discharged from further consideration of the bill so that it may be scheduled by the Majority Leader. This discharge in no way affects your jurisdiction over the subject matter of the bill, and it will not serve as precedent for future referrals. In addition, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Agriculture represented on the conference committee. Finally, I would be pleased to include this letter and any response in the bill report filed by the Committee on Natural Resources to memorialize our understanding.

Thank you for your consideration of my request and for the extraordinary cooperation shown by you and your staff over matters of shared jurisdiction. I look forward to further opportunities to work with you this Congress.

Sincerely,

ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

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

Wildfires are a huge problem in our country. They are becoming more frequent and more intense, and they pose a growing threat to public safety and local economies.

But, instead of taking steps to reduce wildfire threats, this bill tries to scare us into weakening environmental safeguards and giving away public land management to States and localities.

I agree with the bill's sponsor that overgrown vegetation and falling trees can spark forest fires. However, government data shows that this accounts for less than one-third of 1 percent of fires in the past 5 years.

Why are we focusing on this minor problem when it is clear that real wildfire solutions require treating these fires like the disasters that they are under the law, and allowing the Forest Service to use its base budget for preventing wildfires, not just fighting them?

Given what we have seen from Republicans in the Natural Resources Committee, the answer is simple: to chip away at the National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA; shut expert

Federal agencies and concerned citizens out of the land management process; and allow Big Business to profit at the expense of taxpayers and our public lands.

The bill lets State and local electricity reliability standards trump public land management rules. There is not even any requirement that the standards are based on sound science or principles of risk assessment.

If a county says it needs to clear-cut a half mile into a national forest to protect power lines, this bill would allow it, and the Forest Service could only watch. Further, there is no prohibition on selling timber harvested during these operations.

The bill also mandates the Forest Service and BLM use its NEPA categorical exclusion authority, even when vegetation management projects could cause environmental damage. This means that people who value public lands would be completely shut out from the management process. So much for transparency and public input.

Adding insult to injury, the bill waives liability for companies that start forest fires or cause other damage. This is nonsense and shifts an incredible burden and risk onto American taxpayers.

The bill also fails to deal with the root causes of our fire crisis, including the fact that the Forest Service cannot afford mitigation work to prevent wildfires because it spends half of its budget fighting them.

I support legislation making wildfire disasters eligible for disaster assistance under the Stafford Act, and I know many of my colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats, do as well. I am disappointed that we are not passing a bill to do that today, and, instead, are here just pretending to do something about a very serious problem.

I urge a "no" vote on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM).

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in support of H.R. 1873, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act.

In California, we know all too well the disastrous effects of wildfires. Reducing the threat of wildfires requires numerous proactive efforts, including the timely removal of fire hazards.

My colleague, Mr. LAMALFA, has identified a solution to help improve fire hazard removal on Federal lands and prevent electrical blackouts.

There are more than 18,000 miles of power lines on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land, and these transmission lines, running along electricity rights-of-way, are critical to the power distribution in the West.

The costs of operating and maintaining these transmission rights-of-way are borne by utility companies, but approval for companies to remove the fire

hazards comes from the Forest Service. Currently, it takes the Forest Service months to grant approval to remove a dead tree.

H.R. 1873 addresses this issue by allowing utility companies to remove fire risks in a timely manner and ensuring we are being responsible stewards of our Federal lands.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. DENHAM. Additionally, the bill allows utility companies to engage in responsible vegetation management along these rights-of-way, including language that I have added, which encourages the management practices for our pollinators, enhancing the habitat and forage for these pollinators, such as commercial and native bees that are so important to our trees and our community.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense, bipartisan bill.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, let me repeat: We are talking about caution and what is causing fires; and 0.03 percent of fires caused by transmission lines is the data that is available to us. I know facts sometimes don't matter, but they should matter in something as important as this; and 0.03 percent is the cause by transmission lines of fires in the forest on public lands.

We are generalizing the huge wildfires that we have seen to make a case for this bill when the case is about transmission lines, rights-of-away; and it is 0.03 percent as the root cause of those fires over 5 years.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Arizona for yielding me time.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to commend my colleagues for this commonsense legislation. As a result of drought and the bark beetle, there are an estimated over 107 million dead trees in over 33 million acres of forests in California, and it is also throughout the West. Part of this is due to climate change, which is one of the most vexing challenges of our time.

This unprecedented tree mortality has created serious fire risk of wildfires throughout the West. Today, in California, in the Central Valley, we have record temperatures of 109 degrees and 112 degrees. Obviously, that adds to the concern.

One thing that can be done, though, to prevent wildfires is to manage and control the amount of vegetation, particularly in areas where we have increased fire risk. We just, bottom line, have to manage our forests a lot better than we are. We are putting way too much of our budget for managing our forests to putting out fires, and that must change.

But an example of a location with higher fire risk is a utility corridor

with exposed electrical lines that we have throughout the West in forested areas.

In 2015, the Butte fire in northern California, which was the seventh most destructive in California's history, was sparked by a tree that came into contact with a power line. This is easily prevented by removing those trees that could damage lines, reducing fire risk and the cost of repairs to the utility ratepayers, plus the people in the surrounding area, which these fires are devastating, and sometimes lives are lost as well as property.

□ 1515

H.R. 1873, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act, if enacted, would create a process to expedite routine maintenance of vegetation along electric utilities in and near utility corridors and would help prevent future tragedies like the 2015 Butte fire in northern California that was devastating, once again.

The bottom line is that we must do more, and we can. I concur that we should utilize the Stafford Act for forest fires, and that would free up more money to manage the forests. But that is a separate piece of legislation that, hopefully, we will get a chance to act on.

This is a separate piece, and I urge support of this commonsense legislation, for my colleagues to do the same, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR).

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 1873, legislation sponsored by my colleagues from the Western Caucus, which improves the reliability of our electrical grid while, at the same time, protecting our Federal lands and forests from the ravages of wildfires.

This bipartisan legislation is commonsense, plain and simple. This bill allows electric co-ops to prune or remove a tree that would fall on a power line in an electricity corridor if left unmanaged.

Maintaining healthy and well-managed rights-of-way is important for many reasons, not the least of which are the safety of our communities and reliable electricity delivery.

Now, if you knew that a tree was going to fall on a power line and potentially cause a massive blackout or spark a fire, you would probably want to cut it back or get rid of it, right? Of course you would. It is commonsense.

Unfortunately, inconsistent and unpredictable viewpoints between Federal land managers at the Departments of Interior and Agriculture have prevented co-ops from ensuring safety along the corridors, putting many at risk.

Timely decisionmaking is crucial for these co-ops to protect the land, but for far too long, bureaucratic red tape has delayed the removal of hazardous

trees for weeks and, in some cases, months. Too many times, co-ops have notified the proper Department of a dangerous situation only to have the request to remove a hazardous tree either denied or bogged down by unnecessary and duplicative reviews. Not only that, but when the very tree they reported inevitably falls on a power line and sparks a fire, the co-op is left holding the bill for the damages.

Mr. Chairman, this is absurd, and I am pleased that this legislation shifts liability for a fire started under those circumstances back to the party responsible for inaction.

Rolling the dice on forest health is not just unwise, it is flat out irresponsible. I thank the gentlemen from California and Oregon for sponsoring this much-needed legislation, and I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this bill.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SCHRADER).

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1873, the bipartisan Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act.

I want to thank my colleague from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for working with me on this important legislation that will bring much-needed consistency and accountability throughout the Federal land management agencies.

This bill is just common sense. Putting it quite simply, we are just helping our utilities better enhance safety and reliability of the grid and protecting against wildfires and blackouts.

Contrary to what some folks have asserted, this is actually a bipartisan bill supported by quite a few Democrats. This bill is especially vital for most of those in the West, where much of our land is federally owned.

Many of your utilities' and co-ops' service territory can be more than 50 percent federally managed. We have witnessed extreme variations and approaches not only between the Forest Service and the BLM, but within the management agency districts themselves.

Jim Pena, out in Oregon: "There is little consistency from agency to agency, district to district, or even within the same offices." This is the Forest Service talking.

We read and listened to the specter of big companies coming in and clear-cutting our Federal lands. I respectfully suggest that that is why we need these vegetative management plans. They are short, concise, deal with only the utility's right-of-way and the land adjacent to it that could cause problems.

I wonder sometimes what the heck folks are talking about. We have heard complaints about absolving companies from liability. That is not true. What we are saying is, if the Secretary fails to allow the utility to manage the vegetation on Federal lands or adjacent right-of-way in a way that is consistent with their approved vegetative

management plan that they have worked out with them or if the hazard tree or tree is in imminent danger of contacting an electricity line, the utility will not be held liable for wildfire damage or loss. It does not absolve a utility from liability if they are negligent or act in a way that is inconsistent with their vegetative management plan.

I give you a great example our colleague from Arizona talked about. In Oregon, a rural co-op requested trimming some dangerous trees along the rights-of-way by the Forest Service. The Forest Service denied the request. A tree fell on the power line, sparked a fire. The utility was held responsible for paying for that fire when they had actually brought the issue to them in the first place. That is ridiculous.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1873.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chair, I also thank Mr. WEBSTER for managing this legislation for us here on the floor today. I appreciate it.

I rise today as a sponsor in strong support, of course, of H.R. 1873. It is indeed a commonsense vegetation management bill that reduces forest fire danger possibilities and electricity blackouts, while cutting through the bureaucratic red tape in the process.

I also want to thank my colleague Mr. SCHRADER from Oregon for his strong support in making this a true bipartisan effort for something that really should have no partisan roots at all.

As we have heard several of my colleagues speak earlier in testimony on the floor here today, there are gross inconsistencies and impediments in the way the Forest Service and BLM manage transmission lines, particularly in the West, where many of these lines run through difficult terrain and dense forest.

One electric utility in my district, the City of Redding Electric Utility, uses helicopters to engage in vegetation management along the rights-of-way on Federal lands. Such remote and forested areas make it especially difficult to effectively manage an area so large and dense.

Rapid agency response is needed to help electric utility requests to conduct routine and emergency vegetation maintenance along Federal rights-of-way. It is absolutely essential to avoid wildfires and blackouts.

Another benefit this bill brings to utility companies is much-needed safeguards in instances where the Secretary fails to allow them to trim or remove a hazardous tree. There was an unfortunate incident in La Pine, Oregon, in which a rural electric utility company was unjustly billed for a \$300,000 fire suppression bill when its request to remove a tree in imminent danger of falling on a transmission line was denied by the Forest Service.

This bill would provide the electric utility companies the confidence and means to manage and maintain their own transmission lines from overgrown and unmanaged trees along rights-of-way, something the Federal Government should already be doing in the first place.

You see from the example here that electricity frequently is generated in rural parts of our country, and long, long transmission lines are needed to get to the urban parts of the country. So we are all in this: blackouts for the urban areas and, indeed, black skies in our rural areas where the forests are from unneeded wildfires.

The Forest Service's own document shows that, between 2012 and 2013, approximately 350 forest fires were caused by this interface of damaged trees, dying trees, falling trees falling into the different types of lines you would find in rural areas in order to move the power.

These changes to status quo are long overdue. This bill is an answer to many of the problems electricity companies are having with the management of electricity rights-of-way on Federal lands. Too many dying and dead trees have fallen unnecessarily on power lines, sparking devastating forest fires that could have been prevented had they had that ability to remove the tree in question.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. LAMALFA. By providing the utilities with the tools they need to ensure the reliability and the longevity of our national forests, we can bolster investment in energy infrastructure and enhance the lives of all Americans and do much better to preserve the habitat of these areas that we treasure.

I urge swift passage of the bill today and favor in the Senate when it gets over there. Indeed, I thank my colleagues for helping this process along today.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

An example that supporters of this legislation use is from Oregon. It is from 1984. In the 33 years since then, I am aware of no example of a Federal agency refusing to allow a company to do vegetation management work and then holding the company liable for the damages.

In fact, as the committee report for this bill states, the issue of land managers allowing access to rights-of-way was largely resolved by language in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, stating:

Federal agencies responsible for approving access to electric transmission and distribution facilities located on lands within the United States shall, in accordance with applicable law, expedite any Federal agency approvals that are necessary to allow owners and operators of such facilities to comply with any reliability standard approved by the Commission under section 215 of the Federal Power Act that pertains to vegetation management, service restorations, or any

situation that imminently endangers the reliability or safety of the facilities.

If the utility companies feel that BLM and the Forest Service are not complying with the law, they should seek resolution in the court. Instead, they are coming after a backdoor opportunity to affect our public lands.

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

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK).

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Chair, it really is amazing that the bureaucratic tangle that has been caused by our so-called environmental laws has now reached the point that even dead trees on public lands that threaten to fall on power lines and cause major forest fires cannot be removed without permission from Federal bureaucrats. And then to add insult to insanity, when the bureaucracy denies or delays permission and a fire results, the cost of the fire is paid by the utility's customers through higher household electricity bills.

Mr. LAMALFA mentioned a situation in La Pine, Oregon, where the Midstate Electric Cooperative begged the Forest Service for permission to trim trees that were threatening their power lines, and they were refused. Well, sure enough, when one of those trees fell on a power line and started a fire, the utility's customers were forced to pay the firefighting costs that resulted, a third of a million dollars.

Carbon Power & Light warned the Forest Service of trees threatening their lines. The Forest Service required them first to conduct \$1.6 million of environmental studies paid by the utility's customers. If there had been a fire in the meantime, they would have had to pay those costs as well.

Mr. LAMALFA's bill basically does two things:

First, it exempts such projects from time-consuming and costly environmental reviews. After all, there is nothing more devastating to the forest environment than a forest fire. Our environmental laws are now causing these fires.

Second, when a Federal agency delays or denies permission for a utility to remove or trim hazard trees and they end up causing a fire, the liability is placed where it belongs: on the agency and its bureaucrats, not on the utility and its customers; and it gives utilities permission to remove imminent threats to power lines before they can cause a fire.

Mr. Chair, you may have noticed, common sense is not exactly common to government. Let's change that today by adopting this bill.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

At a hearing on similar legislation in the Natural Resources Committee last Congress, both the Forest Service and BLM testified in opposition and explained how they work with utility companies to address vegetation management issues.

In addition to entering into voluntary vegetation management plans, the Forest Service testified that the agency's 2013 vegetation management guide specifies for field staffs the procedures and practices that should be included in operation and maintenance plans for power lines. This guide states that, where vegetation conditions inside or outside the authorized right-of-way pose an imminent threat to power line facilities, utility companies may remove those threats immediately, without prior approval from the Forest Service.

For its part, BLM testified that, under the terms and conditions typically included in a right-of-way grant, a utility company may conduct minor trimming, pruning, and weed management to maintain the right-of-way of a facility after simply notifying BLM. The utility company can often obtain BLM approval for removal of hazardous trees through a streamlined process. For an emergency situation causing an imminent hazard, no BLM preapproval would be necessary.

□ 1530

I understand that some of the companies believe they should be able to do whatever they want whenever they want, but the land does not belong to them. It belongs to the American people, and Federal agencies have a responsibility to all Americans to ensure that those lands are not abused.

Again, facts do matter, and 0.03 percent of fires in public lands were caused by trees falling on transmission lines in the last 5 years—0.03 percent. So we continue to exaggerate the common sense behind the facts that I just laid out.

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

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in favor of H.R. 1873, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act, and I thank Mr. LAMALFA for his leadership on this issue.

I would also like to commend the nonpartisan support for this bill, and associate my remarks with the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SCHRADER).

This bill is a commonsense piece of legislation that will reduce the risk of wildfires and improve the safety and reliability of our electrical grid.

How will this bill accomplish these objectives?

It is really quite simple. When we remove overgrown vegetation near our electric grid on Federal lands, we remove the fuel component of wildfires. By reducing the risk of wildfire, we reduce the risk of an interruption of our electrical grid.

Mr. Chairman, this is so much just plain common sense that it baffles me that we are having to debate it on the

floor of the House of Representatives, but I think it is an example of how misguided some of our land management agencies have become, and the need for broader reforms.

This bill would streamline the Federal review process for removal of trees and vegetation that pose a risk to our power grid and promotes consistency among Federal agencies tasked with the decisions on removal.

If we want to move toward better protection of our forests on Federal lands and the electrical grid that moves through these locations, it is obvious that we should pass H.R. 1873.

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

My colleague from California (Mr. COSTA) brought up one of the real causes of wildfire, and that was climate change, the lack of mitigation, and the situation within the Forest Service budget in which half of the revenue dedicated to that department is used to suppress wildfires.

This administration has denied the existence of climate change, scrubbed it from its vocabulary, from its science, from its study. If we are going to look at the causes of wildfires, if we are going to look at strategies and how we protect the urban and forest interface, if we are going to look at really addressing the subject, then the very salient point that Mr. COSTA brought up regarding climate change has to be part and parcel of the discussion.

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

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP), the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, management of the forests and forest fires is an important and significant topic, but it is not the issue that we are having here today. Climate change is an important significant topic, but it is not the issue that we are talking about today.

We are talking about how you transfer power from point A, where it is produced, to point B, where people live, and make sure that you can continue to have that power flowing there because it impacts the quality of life. This is about how we improve our lives. That is the key issue.

The examples have been given out here before of examples of where that has been interrupted simply because we failed to maintain transmission lines. A good example is down in New Mexico, where, once again, an ash tree—pun intended—actually fell on a forest, on the line, creating a 150,000-acre fire; and then the company that actually owned the line and wanted to maintain it but was not allowed to by the Forest Service was given a \$35 million bill. Unfortunately, the liability of that company was only \$20 million, so you can understand the difficulty that company is in right now.

That is the reality in which we are dealing, and we have to realize that this is a solution to that issue. It is about how we provide power to people.

The only chance I had of meeting President Obama was when he came to Utah and visited Hill Air Force Base, and he was there to talk about solar power that is being used on Hill Air Force Base.

Hill Air Force Base also has a great power source that comes from a neighboring trash dump, which provides steam and methane power that goes to the base itself. And I told the President, when he asked us questions about this, that it is very easy for Hill Air Force Base to have this power source because it is next door. But for most people, they live miles and miles away, and you have to have transmission lines that get the power from where it is produced to where they live, and often across Federal lands.

To his credit, President Obama lit up and said: Yes, not only is that an important issue, but it is also an issue dealing with our entire grid structure that needs to be worked on; another issue that is not today's discussion matter.

And to his credit, his office did contact our office, our committee, and started helping us work on some issues. Even though they did not stay with us to the final conclusion of the bill, the bill we have before us today is the result of those discussions, the result of that effort.

I try to emphasize how bipartisan this bill is; an effort to try and solve a real problem that helps real people with real circumstances that have caused problems in the past that need to be changed. That is what we are attempting to do here.

So I applaud the committee that came up with this bill. I applaud the chief sponsor of that bill. I urge my colleagues to please support this. This is the right thing to do if you really care about helping people.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

You know, this legislation, with a few modifications, could help prevent the 0.03 percent of wildfires that are caused by electricity infrastructure, but the majority refused to work with us on those modifications.

Most importantly, the failure to make vegetation management plans for utility rights-of-way mandatory negates any positive impact this bill might have had. As we have heard from Forest Service and industry at a hearing on similar legislation last Congress, voluntary vegetation management is already allowed and is quite common. This includes the ability for rights-of-way holders to access these areas and conduct vegetation management without notifying Federal land managers until after the fact. This is current law.

The majority claims we need this bill to address delays caused by the approval of unplanned work and delays

associated with removing dead trees on public lands outside of rights-of-way.

Without an up-front planning requirement, I can see authorizing limited activity for utility companies to do targeted vegetation management adjacent to rights-of-way. But instead of offering the commonsense trade off, the bill before us today simply cuts Federal agencies out of the process of managing the American people's land by requiring the Forest Service and BLM to approve plans with no option to modify or reject them if the plans are inadequate.

So whatever the company turns in—the utility company turns in, that is the plan that will become the management plan for that vegetation, regardless of any opinion by Forest Service or BLM.

Further, the bill does not define “adjacent,” meaning that companies could cut trees that are well outside the rights-of-way on public lands. This makes public lands vulnerable to a level of abuse that no one who values them would be willing to support.

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

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I have no more speakers and I am prepared to close, so I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Let me just say that this legislation is a solution without a problem. And as I mentioned earlier several times, facts do matter.

When we are doing a whole-scale change of how we manage rights-of-way on public lands because of 0.03 percent of the causation by utility lines of fires on public lands, that is a heavy-handed way to approach doing legislation. There have been opportunities and modifications, opportunities of expediting the process, but those were not allowed as part of this legislation.

If we, indeed, are going to look at both the wildfire situation, the budget stress on Forest Service to suppress those fires, and this rights-of-way issue, which is miniscule compared to the bigger issues, then I think this legislation has to be rejected, and work on a piece of legislation that has consensus, that is bipartisan, and that addresses the real problems with wildfires in this country, not this utility giveaway that we are doing here today.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chair, again, I commend the bill's sponsors for bringing up this bipartisan, commonsense piece of legislation. I urge my House colleagues to support this bipartisan bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Chair, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 1873—the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act.

North Carolina is home to four national forests that offer visitors and residents access to incredible scenery, wildlife, and a wide variety of recreational activities.

In my district in Western North Carolina, American Forestry management has its roots in the Pisgah National Forest: The Cradle of Forestry, the very first forestry school in the country, is located there.

Proper forestry management is a part of North Carolina's history that we hope to pass on to for our future generations to come.

I commend my colleagues, Reps. DOUG LAMALFA and KURT SCHRADER, for identifying a problem and for providing a common-sense solution to make vegetation management in national forests easier.

Managing vegetation around power lines is important for ensuring electric grid reliability, and for keeping overgrown and falling trees from interfering with nearby power lines which can cause blackouts, wildfires, and other safety hazards.

This bill would ensure utility companies, who are responsible for vegetation management near power lines on federal lands, are no longer delayed by bureaucratic red tape and inconsistent federal standards between agencies.

With the passage of this bill, we will be a step closer to providing expedited forestry management plan approval, while also giving utility companies the authority to remove hazardous debris in emergency situations.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased we are advancing a bipartisan proposal today—I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Chair, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support H.R.1873, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act. This important legislation is meant to proactively prevent major utility reliability problems before they happen.

Currently, electric cooperatives in my district own transmission lines which cross lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to provide essential services to rural areas. I've heard from my electric coops that before addressing problems with these transmission lines, such as clearing downed trees or excess debris near utility poles, they must first be granted approval to do the work from these federal agencies. Any delay in receiving approval costs time, money, and amplifies the impacts of major power outages to my constituents.

Currently, electric coops can be held responsible for damages if a tree falls on a power line and causes a fire, even if the coop is still awaiting approval to work on clearing the hazardous debris.

H.R. 1873 will save utilities unnecessary costs and improve electricity reliability for consumers by streamlining outdated federal land management policies. The language minimizes the need for case-by-case approvals and instead provides expedited review and approvals for routine vegetation management and maintenance activities. Cutting red tape will make it easier for electric utility companies to initiate preventative measures to manage vegetation and woody debris on right-of-way transmission lines. This proactive work will mitigate the effects of fires and storms by clearing hazardous material before the natural disaster hits.

Just two weeks ago, a major storm with winds up to seventy miles-per-hour blew through my district and left thousands of my constituents without power. The strong winds downed trees and took out power lines, severely damaged homes and businesses, and

ripped the roofs off of barns. Lengthy power outages delay the repairs needed to get storm victims' lives back on track. So I am eager to support legislation which helps my communities recover from these painful storms as fast as possible.

Storms like these are commonplace in Minnesota. Our electric coops are ready to complete the work necessary to mitigate the effects of these disasters as much as possible so consumers can have better access to electricity, especially during natural disasters. Again, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to be here today in strong support of H.R. 1873, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act.

As we enter wildfire season, it is of the utmost importance that the federal government act to prevent these devastating disasters.

The Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act strengthens electric grid reliability while reducing the risk of fires and fire hazards caused by poor vegetation management in power line rights-of-way on federally managed public lands.

Currently, bureaucratic permitting delays impede electric utility companies from effectively managing overgrowth near electric infrastructure, which puts these areas at greater risk for a fire event. This common-sense, widely-supported, legislation would require an expedited federal review process for trees that are dangerously close to power lines.

The effective management of this unruly vegetation is especially important in my home state of California, where in 2016, an overwhelming 6,986 fires destroyed over 565,000 acres of land throughout the state.

I thank my Colleague from California, Mr. LAMALFA, for his leadership on this legislation and I look forward to supporting the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act later today.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 1873

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 “Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act”.

SEC. 2. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT, FACILITY INSPECTION, AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE ON FEDERAL LANDS CONTAINING ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 512. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT, FACILITY INSPECTION, AND OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE RELATING TO ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION FACILITY RIGHTS-OF-WAY.

“(a) GENERAL DIRECTION.—In order to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution rights-of-way and related facilities and adjacent property, the Secretary, with respect to public lands and other lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary, and the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System lands, shall provide direction to ensure that all existing and future rights-of-way, however established (including by grant, special use authorization, and easement), for electrical transmission and distribution facilities on such lands include provisions for utility vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance activities that, while consistent with applicable law—

“(1) are developed in consultation with the holder of the right-of-way;

“(2) enable the owner or operator of a facility to operate and maintain the facility in good working order and to comply with Federal, State and local electric system reliability and fire safety requirements, including reliability standards established by the Electric Reliability Organization as defined under 16 U.S.C. 824o(a) and plans to meet such reliability standards;

“(3) minimize the need for case-by-case or annual approvals for—

“(A) routine vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance activities within existing electrical transmission and distribution rights-of-way; and

“(B) utility vegetation management activities that are necessary to control hazard trees within or adjacent to electrical transmission and distribution rights-of-way; and

“(4) when review is required, provide for expedited review and approval of utility vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance activities, especially activities requiring prompt action to avoid an adverse impact on human safety or electric reliability to avoid fire hazards.

“(b) VEGETATION MANAGEMENT, FACILITY INSPECTION, AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLANS.—

“(1) DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION.—Consistent with subsection (a), the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture shall provide owners and operators of electric transmission and distribution facilities located on lands described in such subsection with the option to develop and submit a vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance plan, that at each transmission or distribution owner or operator’s discretion may cover some or all of the owner or operator’s transmission and distribution rights-of-way on Federal lands, for approval to the Secretary with jurisdiction over the lands. A plan under this paragraph shall enable the owner or operator of a facility, at a minimum, to comply with applicable Federal, State, and local electric system reliability and fire safety requirements, as provided in subsection (a)(2). The Secretaries shall not have the authority to modify those requirements.

“(2) REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS.—The Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture shall jointly develop a consolidated and coordinated process for review and approval of—

“(A) vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance plans submitted under paragraph (1) that—

“(i) assures prompt review and approval not to exceed 90 days;

“(ii) includes timelines and benchmarks for agency comments to submitted plans and final approval of such plans;

“(iii) is consistent with applicable law; and

“(iv) minimizes the costs of the process to the reviewing agency and the entity submitting the plans; and

“(B) amendments to the plans in a prompt manner if changed conditions necessitate a modification to a plan.

“(3) NOTIFICATION.—The review and approval process under paragraph (2) shall—

“(A) include notification by the agency of any changed conditions that warrant a modification to a plan;

“(B) provide an opportunity for the owner or operator to submit a proposed plan amendment to address directly the changed condition; and

“(C) allow the owner or operator to continue to implement those elements of the approved plan that do not directly and adversely affect the condition precipitating the need for modification.

“(4) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION PROCESS.—The Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture shall apply his or her categorical exclusion process under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) to plans developed under this subsection on existing transmission and distribution rights-of-way under this subsection.

“(5) IMPLEMENTATION.—A plan approved under this subsection shall become part of the authorization governing the covered right-of-way and hazard trees adjacent to the right-of-way. If a vegetation management plan is proposed for an existing transmission or distribution facility concurrent with the siting of a new transmission or distribution facility, necessary reviews shall be completed as part of the siting process or sooner. Once the plan is approved, the owner or operator shall provide the agency with only a notification of activities anticipated to be undertaken in the coming year, a description of those activities, and certification that the activities are in accordance with the plan.

“(6) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) VEGETATION MANAGEMENT, FACILITY INSPECTION, AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLAN.—The term ‘vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance plan’ means a plan that—

“(i) is prepared by the owner or operator of one or more electrical transmission or distribution facilities to cover one or more electric transmission and distribution rights-of-way; and

“(ii) provides for the long-term, cost-effective, efficient and timely management of facilities and vegetation within the width of the right-of-way and adjacent Federal lands to enhance electricity reliability, promote public safety, and avoid fire hazards.

“(B) OWNER OR OPERATOR.—The terms ‘owner’ and ‘operator’ include contractors or other agents engaged by the owner or operator of a facility.

“(C) HAZARD TREE.—The term ‘hazard tree’ means any tree inside the right-of-way or located outside the right-of-way that has been designated, prior to tree failure, by either the owner or operator of a transmission or distribution facility, or the Secretary or the Secretary of Agriculture, to be likely to fail and cause a high risk of injury, damage, or disruption within 10 feet or less of an electric power line or related structure if it fell.

“(c) RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY CONDITIONS.—If vegetation on Federal lands within, or hazard trees on Federal lands adjacent to, an electrical transmission or distribution right-of-way granted by the Secretary or the Secretary of Agriculture has contacted or is in imminent danger of contacting one or more electric transmission or distribution lines, the owner or operator of the transmission or distribution lines—

“(1) may prune or remove the vegetation or hazard tree to avoid the disruption of electric service and risk of fire; and

“(2) shall notify the appropriate local agent of the relevant Secretary not later than 24 hours after such removal.

“(d) COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE RELIABILITY AND SAFETY STANDARDS.—If vegetation on Federal lands within or adjacent to an electrical transmission or distribution right-of-way

under the jurisdiction of each Secretary does not meet clearance requirements under standards established by the Electric Reliability Organization as defined under 16 U.S.C. 824o(a), or by State and local authorities, and the Secretary having jurisdiction over the lands has failed to act to allow a transmission or distribution facility owner or operator to conduct vegetation management activities within 3 business days after receiving a request to allow such activities, the owner or operator may, after notifying the Secretary, conduct such vegetation management activities to meet those clearance requirements.

“(e) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary or Secretary of Agriculture shall report requests and actions made under subsections (c) and (d) annually on each Secretary’s website.

“(f) LIABILITY.—An owner or operator of a transmission or distribution facility shall not be held liable for wildfire damage, loss or injury, including the cost of fire suppression, if—

“(1) the Secretary or the Secretary of Agriculture fails to allow the owner or operator to operate consistently with an approved vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance plan on Federal lands under the relevant Secretary’s jurisdiction within or adjacent to a right-of-way to comply with Federal, State or local electric system reliability and fire safety standards, including standards established by the Electric Reliability Organization as defined under 16 U.S.C. 824o(a); or

“(2) the Secretary or the Secretary of Agriculture fails to allow the owner or operator of the transmission or distribution facility to perform appropriate vegetation management activities in response to a hazard tree as defined under subsection (b)(6), or a tree in imminent danger of contacting the owner’s or operator’s transmission or distribution facility.

“(g) TRAINING AND GUIDANCE.—In consultation with the electric utility industry, the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture are encouraged to develop a program to train personnel of the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service involved in vegetation management decisions on rights-of-way relating to transmission and distribution facilities to ensure that such personnel—

“(1) understand electric system reliability and fire safety requirements, including reliability standards established by the Electric Reliability Organization as defined under 16 U.S.C. 824o(a);

“(2) assist owners and operators of transmission and distribution facilities to comply with applicable electric reliability and fire safety requirements; and

“(3) encourage and assist willing owners and operators of transmission and distribution facilities to incorporate on a voluntary basis vegetation management practices to enhance habitats and forage for pollinators and for other wildlife so long as the practices are compatible with the integrated vegetation management practices necessary for reliability and safety.

“(h) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

“(1) not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section, prescribe regulations, or amend existing regulations, to implement this section; and

“(2) not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this section, finalize regulations, or amend existing regulations, to implement this section.

“(i) EXISTING VEGETATION MANAGEMENT, FACILITY INSPECTION AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLANS.—Nothing in this section requires an owner or operator to develop and submit a vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance plan if one has already been approved by the Secretary or Secretary of Agriculture before the date of the enactment of this section.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761 et seq.), is

amended by inserting after the item relating to section 511 the following new item:

“Sec. 512. *Vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance relating to electric transmission and distribution facility rights-of-way.*”

The CHAIR. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part A of House Report 115-186. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. CARBAJAL

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part A of House Report 115-186.

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

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 5, beginning on line 10, strike “the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture shall provide”.

Page 5, beginning on line 13, strike “with the option to” and insert “shall”.

Page 5, beginning on line 16, strike “plan, that at each transmission or distribution owner or operator’s discretion may cover some or all” and insert “plan covering all”.

Page 6, beginning on line 1, strike “The Secretaries shall not have the authority to modify those requirements.”.

Page 6, beginning on line 10, strike “and approval” and insert “, approval, denial, or modification”.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 392, the gentleman from California (Mr. CARBAJAL) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Chairman, my amendment to H.R. 1873 ensures that we make up-front vegetation management planning a requirement for utilities that hold transmission rights-of-way on public lands.

I agree with Mr. LAMALFA’s intent to address the threats of wildfires. Coming from local government, as the former county supervisor for Santa Barbara, I have experienced firsthand the obstacles and challenges of balancing red tape and coordination among stakeholders.

Now, as the Representative for the Central Coast in California, I can tell you, we are no strangers to wildfires. Just last year, my district witnessed the devastating impacts of the Rey and Sherpa fires.

Unfortunately, the impacts of these wildfires are widespread. The Sherpa fire burned 7,474 acres in Santa Barbara County and the Los Padres National Forest for nearly a month last June. Then in January of this year, the heavy rains in the area triggered mudslides and flooding.

If we can take action to prevent wildfires, we should. We know it pays to be prepared. Congress needs to act to improve better coordination and clarity between Federal and land managers and utility companies that hold rights-of-way on public lands. In improving coordination, we can help utilities prevent fires due to overgrown vegetation or trees contacting power lines.

In turn, it would help the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management respond more quickly and consistently for requests to access and maintain rights-of-way on public lands. At the same time, the agencies can function as good stewards of our natural resources while enhancing their effectiveness in addressing fire hazard vegetation.

While well-intentioned, H.R. 1873 does not solve the problem of poor coordination.

Mr. Chairman, the underlying bill does not address the threats of wildfires because the rights-of-way maintenance plans described in the legislation are voluntary. Currently, owners of transmission lines can work with the Federal land managers to develop these plans. This is no different than the status quo.

That is why I introduced my amendment to ensure that we make up-front planning a requirement for utilities.

□ 1545

I urge passage of my amendment to make sure that we are prepared and minimize the threats of wildfires.

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

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chair, the goal of H.R. 1873 is to provide certainty to utilities, their line workers, and their consumers, not forcing unnecessary, one-size-fits-all regulations.

Each plan can be tailored by an individual utility based on the service territory, region, and other characteristics. Some utilities may not choose to submit plans because they are satisfied with their local Forest Service office. Others, especially those who have rights-of-ways that predate the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, may not want to trigger Federal paperwork costs that are ultimately passed on to their consumers.

This amendment, if adopted, would significantly burden Federal Land Management agencies by inundating them with all kinds of submittals. Additionally, if you want to increase the cost of this bill, then this amendment will do just that.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment, and I would inject additional bureaucracy into the bill that is unintended to do exactly the opposite of what this bill intended to do.

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

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Chair, unfortunately, this bill is in search of a problem. Voluntary is the status quo. That is the case today, and we see the wildfires happen day in and day out. So, again, I urge my colleagues to support my amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

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

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MS. SINEMA

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part A of House Report 115-186.

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

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 12, line 9, strike “; and” and insert a semicolon.

Page 12, line 16, strike the period and inserting “; and”.

Page 12, after line 16, insert the following: “(4) understand how existing and emerging unmanned technologies can help electric utilities, Federal, State, and local governments, and private landowners to more efficiently identify vegetation management needs, lower ratepayer energy costs, and reduce the risk of wildfires.”

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 392, the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Arizona.

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Chairman, I thank Chairman BISHOP and Ranking Member GRIJALVA for their leadership. I also thank Congressman LAMALFA, Congressman SCHRADER, and all of the other Members for their hard work on this issue. In particular, I thank Congressman GOSAR, who is here today, Congressman TIPTON, and Congressman O’HALLERAN for cosponsoring our bipartisan amendment.

Mr. Chairman, the Sinema amendment ensures the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior are educated on how unmanned technologies are transforming the energy industry to improve maintenance, lower costs, and reduce the risk of wildfires. Unmanned technology is changing the way Arizonans do business.

Currently, energy companies use manned helicopters to check transmission lines and direct repair and maintenance crews. This work ensures Arizona’s electric grid remains resilient, reliable, efficient, and that it

works when Arizona families and businesses need it. But utilities and cooperatives believe that unmanned technology can improve the way we manage our energy infrastructure. Unmanned technologies can monitor transmission lines quickly and safely in multiple locations, enabling more efficient operations and maintenance.

They provide better situational awareness to crews and managers, reducing accidents and workplace injuries. It also improves vegetation management, disaster prevention, and disaster response. These are critical issues in my home State of Arizona. In rural areas, our transmission and distribution lines run through Federal land that are prone to wildfires.

I am a cosponsor of the underlying bill because I recognize the importance of keeping these rights-of-way clear of dry brush and fallen trees. Streamlining the process that allows us to perform routine maintenance and prevent wildfires that too often endanger our communities is just commonsense. Our bipartisan amendment improves the underlying bill by ensuring that unmanned technologies integrate appropriately, quickly, and effectively into broader vegetation management, disaster prevention, and disaster response strategies.

Unmanned technologies have the potential to improve efficiency, lower energy costs for Arizona families and businesses, and reduce the risk of dangerous wildfires by ensuring that rights-of-way are reliable and properly maintained. Federal agencies should be prepared to embrace these smart technologies.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support the Sinema amendment and the underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed.

The CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman?

There was no objection.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of this amendment to H.R. 1873. This bipartisan amendment would ensure that personnel involved in vegetation management decisions understand the benefit that unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, or drones, can add to the maintenance and management of transmission lines.

In 2017, not only does this policy make sense, it is essential. Our electric grid and forests should be protected with this effective and cost-efficient technology, which has proven its worth in so many other areas, including national defense and private industry.

In my home State of Arizona, UAVs have proven to be highly valuable tools in forest management. Utilizing UAV expertise from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona, as well as Northern Arizona Uni-

versity in Flagstaff, land managers have greatly improved their ability to monitor forest conditions both at scale and down to the detail of individual trees and branches.

Proper vegetation management around transmission lines is essential to preventing power outages and dangerous forest fires. UAV technology makes transmission line monitoring safer, cheaper, and more effective.

As Members of Congress, we have a responsibility to our constituents to pursue smarter, safer, and cheaper approaches to public policy and resource management. This amendment and this bill allow us to do so in a bipartisan way. I am proud to partner with the gentlewoman from Arizona on this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to extend my thanks to my friend and colleague, Mr. GOSAR from Arizona. I encourage my fellow Members to support the amendment and the underlying bill.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MR. BEYER

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in part A of House Report 115-186.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer an amendment to the bill.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill, insert the following:
SEC. 3. NO LOSS OF FUNDS FOR WILD-FIRE SUPPRESSION.

Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall detract from the availability of funds or other resources for wild-fire suppression.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 392, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Chairman, I believe the bill before us today is a well-intentioned attempt to create a process which would minimize the risk of fire along electrical utilities' rights-of-way. Yes, there are some problems with the bill, but my most significant objection is that this bill, our Natural Resources Committee, and this Congress refuse to act on the urgent need to address how our U.S. Forest Service deals with wildfires.

The Forest Service burned through more than half of its budget last year fighting wildfires. Yet our leadership won't bring to the floor for a vote a bipartisan legislation that deals with the problem of "fire borrowing."

In the 114th Congress, just such a bill, the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act

had 151 cosponsors—67 Republicans, 84 Democrats—but it never even got a committee hearing. So that is disappointing, and even irresponsible.

So, once again, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are going to go into this fire season knowing that they don't have the resources to do the work necessary to mitigate wildfire damage on U.S. public lands.

In a recent report on fire suppression costs, the Forest Service reported that funding available for recreation, heritage, and wilderness had fallen 15 percent; funding for roads is down 46 percent; facility spending, off 68 percent; deferred maintenance outlays have been slashed by a disastrous 95 percent.

Mr. Chairman, in my two terms on the Natural Resources Committee, we often debate and fret about how little money is available for maintenance of our public lands, the deferred maintenance. The diversion of these funds for wildfire suppression is among the many causes.

Non-fire-related staff has been cut by 39 percent since 1998, and over the last two decades, the cost of fire preparedness and suppression activities has grown from 62 percent of the Forest Service's total budget, to more than half—52 percent.

That shift has come at the expense of programs and staff that every American wants: staff on recreation, permits, timber sales, hunting, and fishing. Everything else is suffering because of our inability to deal in a constructive way with wildfire mitigation.

So now is the time that we address wildfires to be treated as the major disasters they are and for the efforts to put them out, to be eligible for disaster assistance, and not subtract it from funds that land managers need to do their daily jobs.

So my very simple one-sentence amendment simply says that no money in this bill—this bill will not divert legitimate wildfire mitigation money more to wildfires than is already there.

I urge you to vote "yes" on my amendment so, at the very least, we can prevent this bill from detracting from further Federal wildfire suppression efforts.

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

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to this amendment, but I am not opposed to it.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes. There was no objection.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Chairman, the amendment prohibits any loss of funds for wildfire suppression activities. The bill also provides electric utilities with the certainty that they need to ensure that downed trees do not fall on power lines, which would prevent many of these wildfires from starting in the first place.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to adopt this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Chair, I want to thank my friend from Florida for his support for this sensible amendment, and I hope that we can proceed.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. CARBAJAL

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

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 171, noes 243, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 314]

AYES—171

Adams	Gallego	O'Rourke
Aguilar	Garamendi	Pallone
Barragan	Gonzalez (TX)	Panetta
Bass	Green, Al	Pascrell
Beatty	Green, Gene	Payne
Bera	Grijalva	Pelosi
Beyer	Gutiérrez	Perlmutter
Blumenauer	Hanabusa	Pingree
Blunt Rochester	Hastings	Pocan
Bonamici	Heck	Polis
Brown (MD)	Himes	Price (NC)
Brownley (CA)	Hoyer	Quigley
Bustos	Huffman	Raskin
Butterfield	Jackson Lee	Rice (NY)
Capuano	Jayapal	Richmond
Carbajal	Jeffries	Rosen
Cárdenas	Johnson (GA)	Roybal-Allard
Carson (IN)	Johnson, E. B.	Ruiz
Cartwright	Kaptur	Ruppersberger
Castor (FL)	Keating	Rush
Castro (TX)	Kelly (IL)	Sánchez
Chu, Judy	Kennedy	Sarbanes
Cicilline	Khanna	Schakowsky
Clark (MA)	Kihuen	Schiff
Clarke (NY)	Kildee	Scott (VA)
Clay	Krishnamoorthi	Scott, David
Cleaver	Kuster (NH)	Serrano
Clyburn	Langevin	Sewell (AL)
Cohen	Larson (CT)	Shea-Porter
Connolly	Lawrence	Sherman
Conyers	Lawson (FL)	Sinema
Cooper	Lee	Sires
Correa	Levin	Slaughter
Courtney	Lewis (GA)	Smith (WA)
Crist	Lieu, Ted	Soto
Crowley	Liptinski	Speier
Cuellar	Loeb sack	Suozzi
Davis (CA)	Lofgren	Swalwell (CA)
Davis, Danny	Lowenthal	Takano
DeGette	Lowe y	Thompson (CA)
Delaney	Lujan Grisham,	Thompson (MS)
DeLauro	M.	Titus
DelBene	Luján, Ben Ray	Tonko
Demings	Maloney,	Torres
DeSaulnier	Carolyn B.	Tsongas
Deutch	Maloney, Sean	Vargas
Dingell	Matsui	Veasey
Doggett	McCollum	Vela
Doyle, Michael	McEachin	Velázquez
F.	McGovern	Visclosky
Ellison	McNerney	Walz
Engel	Meeks	Wasserman
Eshoo	Meng	Schultz
Espallat	Moore	Waters, Maxine
Esty (CT)	Moulton	Watson Coleman
Evans	Murphy (FL)	Welch
Foster	Nadler	Yarmuth
Frankel (FL)	Neal	
Fudge	Nolan	

NOES—243

Abraham	Gohmert	O'Halleran
Allen	Goodlatte	Olson
Amash	Gosar	Palazzo
Amodei	Gottheimer	Palmer
Arrington	Gowdy	Paulsen
Babin	Granger	Pearce
Bacon	Graves (GA)	Perry
Banks (IN)	Graves (LA)	Peters
Barletta	Graves (MO)	Peterson
Barr	Griffith	Pittenger
Barton	Grothman	Poe (TX)
Bergman	Guthrie	Poliquin
Biggs	Harper	Posey
Bilirakis	Harris	Ratcliffe
Bishop (GA)	Hartzler	Reed
Bishop (MI)	Hensarling	Reichert
Bishop (UT)	Herrera Beutler	Renacci
Black	Hice, Jody B.	Rice (SC)
Blackburn	Higgins (LA)	Roby
Bost	Hill	Roe (TN)
Boyle, Brendan	Holding	Rogers (AL)
F.	Hollingsworth	Rogers (KY)
Brady (PA)	Hudson	Rohrabacher
Brady (TX)	Huizenga	Rokita
Brat	Hultgren	Rooney, Francis
Bridenstine	Hunter	Rooney, Thomas
Brooks (AL)	Hurd	J.
Brooks (IN)	Issa	Ros-Lehtinen
Buchanan	Jenkins (KS)	Roskam
Buck	Jenkins (WV)	Ross
Bucshon	Johnson (LA)	Rothfus
Budd	Johnson (OH)	Rouzer
Burgess	Jones	Royce (CA)
Byrne	Jordan	Russell
Calvert	Joyce (OH)	Rutherford
Carter (GA)	Katko	Sanford
Carter (TX)	Kelly (MS)	Schneider
Chabot	Kelly (PA)	Schrader
Chaffetz	Kilmer	Schweikert
Cheney	Kind	Scott, Austin
Coffman	King (IA)	Sensenbrenner
Cole	King (NY)	Sessions
Collins (GA)	Kinzinger	Shimkus
Collins (NY)	Knight	Shuster
Comer	Kustoff (TN)	Simpson
Conaway	Labrador	Smith (MO)
Cook	LaHood	Smith (NE)
Costa	LaMalfa	Smith (NJ)
Costello (PA)	Lamborn	Smith (TX)
Crawford	Lance	Smucker
Culberson	Latta	Stefanik
Curbelo (FL)	Lewis (MN)	Stewart
Davidson	LoBiondo	Stivers
Davis, Rodney	Loudermilk	Taylor
DeFazio	Love	Tenney
Denham	Lucas	Thompson (PA)
Dent	Luetkemeyer	Thornberry
DeSantis	MacArthur	Tiberi
DesJarlais	Marchant	Tipton
Diaz-Balart	Marino	Trott
Donovan	Marshall	Turner
Duffy	Massie	Upton
Duncan (SC)	Mast	Valadao
Duncan (TN)	McCarthy	Wagner
Dunn	McCaull	Walberg
Emmer	McClintock	Walden
Estes (KS)	McHenry	Walker
Farenthold	McKinley	Walorski
Faso	McMorris	Walters, Mimi
Ferguson	Rodgers	Webster (FL)
Fitzpatrick	McSally	Wenstrup
Fleischmann	Meadows	Westerman
Flores	Meehan	Williams
Fortenberry	Messer	Wilson (SC)
Fox	Mitchell	Wittman
Franks (AZ)	Moolenaar	Womack
Frelinghuysen	Mooney (WV)	Woodall
Gaetz	Mullin	Yoder
Gallagher	Murphy (PA)	Yoho
Garrett	Newhouse	Young (AK)
Gianforte	Norcross	Young (IA)
Gibbs	Nunes	Zeldin

NOT VOTING—17

Aderholt	Higgins (NY)	Noem
Blum	Johnson, Sam	Ryan (OH)
Comstock	Larsen (WA)	Scalise
Cramer	Long	Weber (TX)
Cummings	Lynch	Wilson (FL)
Gabbard	Napolitano	

□ 1622

Messrs. CHAFFETZ, FERGUSON, ROE of Tennessee, GARRETT, KNIGHT, ROSS, MOONEY of West Virginia, PETERS, BRENDAN F. BOYLE

of Pennsylvania, O'HALLERAN, KIND, and SCHNEIDER changed their vote from "aye" to "no."

Messrs. CARSON of Indiana, LIPINSKI, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. GARAMENDI changed their vote from "no" to "aye."

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

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

The amendment was agreed to.

The CHAIR. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DONOVAN) having assumed the chair, Mr. WOMACK, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1873) to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands, and, pursuant to House Resolution 392, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

(By unanimous consent, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ was allowed to speak out of order.)

CONGRESSIONAL WOMEN'S SOFTBALL GAME

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you with your congressional women's softball team, who are tanned, rested, and ready to beat the press tonight.

Our bipartisan team has been practicing for the last 3 months at 7 in the morning, two to three mornings a week, with batting practice at night at the cages at the Nationals training academy.

We have been singularly focused on two things—I know it doesn't make sense, because that would mean it wasn't singularly—making sure that we can continue to raise awareness about the risk that young women face of breast cancer and to make sure that we can shine a spotlight on the fact that young women can and do get breast cancer.

This is our ninth annual game. It is the eighth time that we are playing the common "enemy"—we say that affectionately—the female Capitol press corps. They have been incredible partners in helping this year cross the incredible milestone of raising more than \$1 million for the Young Survival Coalition. We are so proud of that.

We want to thank our coaches who have been remarkable through all these years. Of course, we have our head coach, Torie Barnes, Jo Ann Emerson's daughter, who was the co-founder of this game 9 years ago; our own House favorite, Natalie Buchanan, who is an amazing new mom who has

been out there with us, in spite of just having a baby a few short months ago; Coach Jim, who has been amazing as well; and, of course, our very own colleague, Coach ED PERLMUTTER from the great State of Colorado.

Come on out tonight at 7 p.m. at Watkins Recreation Center, 420 12th Street, SE. Turn right at the CVS.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY), my cocaptain, friend, and fellow appropriator.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I think everyone would agree with me when I say that, in the midst of the tragedy and horror last week, there are also special moments that brought us together and reminded us of what is really important. One was right here in this Chamber, where we heard touching speeches from PAUL RYAN and Leader PELOSI; another was at the baseball game when the entire Capitol Hill community gathered in an amazing show of support for our friend, STEVE SCALISE, our Capitol Police officers and their heroic acts; as well as Matt, Zack, David, and Crystal; and all of those who were involved.

That spirit of unity and togetherness is a big part of why we play this softball game. Our relationships as Members of Congress are stronger because of this game. I don't think we can have too many reminders about the importance of unity and friendship.

I encourage all Members and staff to come join us tonight and go to bat for this great cause. Unlike the baseball game, Republicans and Democrats don't compete against each other. We team up against one opponent we can all agree on: the press.

So, beat cancer, beat the press.

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

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

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

The amendment was agreed to.

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

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

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. GRIJALVA. 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 300, noes 118, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 315]

AYES—300

Abraham	Frelinghuysen	McSally
Aguilar	Gaetz	Meadows
Allen	Gallagher	Meehan
Amash	Garamendi	Messer
Amodei	Garrett	Mitchell
Arrington	Gianforte	Moolenaar
Babin	Gibbs	Mooney (WV)
Bacon	Gohmert	Moulton
Banks (IN)	Gonzalez (TX)	Mullin
Barletta	Goodlatte	Murphy (FL)
Barr	Gosar	Murphy (PA)
Barton	Gottheimer	Neuhouse
Bera	Gotwy	Noem
Bergman	Granger	Nolan
Biggs	Graves (GA)	Norcross
Bilirakis	Graves (LA)	Nunes
Bishop (GA)	Graves (MO)	O'Halleran
Bishop (MI)	Green, Al	O'Rourke
Bishop (UT)	Green, Gene	Olson
Black	Griffith	Palazzo
Blackburn	Grothman	Palmer
Bonamici	Guthrie	Panetta
Bost	Harper	Paulsen
Boyle, Brendan F.	Harris	Pearce
Brady (PA)	Hartzler	Perry
Brady (TX)	Heck	Peters
Brat	Hensarling	Peterson
Bridenstine	Herrera Beutler	Pittenger
Brooks (AL)	Hice, Jody B.	Poe (TX)
Brooks (IN)	Higgins (LA)	Poliquin
Brown (MD)	Hill	Poliquin
Brownley (CA)	Himes	Posey
Buchanan	Holding	Ratcliffe
Buck	Hollingsworth	Reed
Bucshon	Hudson	Reichert
Budd	Huizenga	Renacci
Burgess	Hultgren	Rice (SC)
Bustos	Hunter	Roby
Butterfield	Hurd	Roe (TN)
Byrne	Issa	Rogers (AL)
Calvert	Jenkins (KS)	Rogers (KY)
Cárdenas	Jenkins (WV)	Rohrabacher
Carter (GA)	Johnson (LA)	Rokita
Carter (TX)	Johnson (OH)	Rooney, Francis
Chabot	Jones	Rooney, Thomas J.
Chaffetz	Jordan	Ros-Lehtinen
Cheney	Joyce (OH)	Rosen
Coffman	Katko	Roskam
Cole	Kelly (MS)	Ross
Collins (GA)	Kelly (PA)	Rothfus
Collins (NY)	Kihuen	Rouzer
Comer	Kilmer	Royce (CA)
Conaway	King (IA)	Ruiz
Connolly	King (NY)	Russell
Cook	Kinzinger	Rutherford
Cooper	Knight	Sanford
Correa	Krishnamoorthi	Schneider
Costa	Kuster (NH)	Schrader
Costello (PA)	Kustoff (TN)	Schweikert
Courtney	Labrador	Scott, Austin
Cramer	LaHood	Scott, David
Crawford	LaMalfa	Sensenbrenner
Crist	Lamborn	Sessions
Cuellar	Lance	Shea-Porter
Culberson	Larson (CT)	Shimkus
Curbelo (FL)	Latta	Shuster
Davidson	Lawson (FL)	Simpson
Davis, Rodney	Lewis (MN)	Sinema
DeFazio	Lipinski	Sires
Delaney	LoBiondo	Smith (MO)
Denham	Loeb sack	Smith (NE)
Dent	Lofgren	Smith (NJ)
DeSantis	Loudermilk	Smith (TX)
DesJarlais	Love	Smucker
Diaz-Balart	Lucas	Soto
Donovan	Luetkemeyer	Stefanik
Doyle, Michael F.	Lujan Grisham, M.	Stewart
Duffy	Luján, Ben Ray	Stivers
Duncan (SC)	MacArthur	Swalwell (CA)
Duncan (TN)	Maloney, Sean	Taylor
Dunn	Marchant	Tenney
Emmer	Marino	Thompson (CA)
Eshoo	Marshall	Thompson (PA)
Estes (KS)	Massie	Thornberry
Esty (CT)	Mast	Tiberi
Farenthold	Matsui	Tipton
Faso	McCarthy	Torres
Ferguson	McCaul	Trott
Fitzpatrick	McClintock	Turner
Fleischmann	McHenry	Upton
Flores	McKinley	Valadao
Fortenberry	McMorris	Vargas
Fox	Rodgers	Vela
Franks (AZ)	McNerney	Walberg
		Walden

Walker	Westerman	Yoder
Walorski	Williams	Yoho
Walters, Mimi	Wilson (SC)	Young (AK)
Walz	Witman	Young (IA)
Webster (FL)	Womack	Zeldin
Wenstrup	Woodall	

NOES—118

Adams	Gallego	Pelosi
Barragán	Grijalva	Perlmutter
Bass	Gutiérrez	Pingree
Beatty	Hanabusa	Pocan
Beyer	Hastings	Polis
Blumenauer	Hoyer	Price (NC)
Blunt Rochester	Huffman	Quigley
Capuano	Jackson Lee	Raskin
Carbajal	Jayapal	Rice (NY)
Carson (IN)	Jeffries	Richmond
Cartwright	Johnson (GA)	Royal-Allard
Castor (FL)	Johnson, E. B.	Ruppersberger
Castro (TX)	Kaptur	Rush
Chu, Judy	Keating	Ryan (OH)
Cicilline	Kelly (IL)	Sánchez
Clark (MA)	Kennedy	Sarbanes
Clarke (NY)	Khanna	Schakowsky
Clay	Kildee	Schiff
Cleaver	Langevin	Scott (VA)
Clyburn	Lawrence	Serrano
Cohen	Lee	Sewell (AL)
Conyers	Levin	Sherman
Crowley	Lewis (GA)	Slaughter
Davis (CA)	Lieu, Ted	Smith (WA)
Davis, Danny	Lowenthal	Speier
DeGette	Lowe	Suozi
DeLauro	Lynch	Takano
DelBene	Maloney,	Thompson (MS)
Demings	Carolyn B.	Titus
DeSaulnier	McCollum	Tonko
Deutch	McEachin	Tsongas
Dingell	McGovern	Veasey
Doggett	Meeke	Velázquez
Ellison	Meng	Vislosky
Engel	Moore	Wasserman
Espallat	Nadler	Schultz
Evans	Neal	Waters, Maxine
Foster	Pallone	Watson Coleman
Frankel (FL)	Pascrell	Welch
Fudge	Payne	Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—13

Aderholt	Higgins (NY)	Scalise
Blum	Johnson, Sam	Weber (TX)
Comstock	Larsen (WA)	Wilson (FL)
Cummings	Long	
Gabbard	Napolitano	

□ 1639

Messrs. KEATING and PALLONE changed their vote from "aye" to "no." So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during rollcall votes No. 314 and 315 due to my spouse's health situation in California. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on the Carbajal Amendment. I would also have voted "nay" on H.R. 1873—Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I was not present today, June 21, for rollcall votes. I was attending a memorial service in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 311, "yea" on rollcall No. 312, "yea" on rollcall No. 313, "nay" on rollcall No. 314, and "yea" on rollcall No. 315.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Ms. Mariel Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2842, ACCELERATING INDIVIDUALS INTO THE WORKFORCE ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-187) on the resolution (H. Res. 396) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2842) to provide for the conduct of demonstration projects to test the effectiveness of subsidized employment for TANF recipients, and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

CELEBRATING THE REMARKABLE CAREER OF TINA HERRING

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the remarkable career of Ms. Tina Herring, who retired as branch manager with the Georgia Department of Veterans Services on Thursday, June 1, 2017.

During her childhood, Ms. Herring often moved with her father, a Pearl Harbor survivor who frequently traveled on Air Force assignments. This instilled an appreciation for our Nation's Armed Forces.

She began her career with the Department of Veterans Services in 1985 as a benefits caseworker. In this position, she worked to ensure that Georgia's servicemen and -women received the crucial resources and benefits which they and their families deserve.

Ms. Herring was promoted to oversee multiple southeast branches of the Georgia Veterans Services Department in 2009 because of her exceptional dedication to Georgia's veterans and her 25 years of hard work.

Ms. Herring, thank you for your extraordinary effort in honoring our servicemen and -women. You have managed southeast Georgia's Veterans Department with exceptional precision. I wish you the best of luck in all your future endeavors.

THE NRA AND PHILANDO CASTILE

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

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask a simple question: Who is the National Rifle Association here to protect?

I ask this question because Philando Castile, exercising his constitutionally protected right to bear arms, was shot dead in front of his girlfriend and his young daughter.

At that time the NRA claimed that they were awaiting "more facts." A year later, the investigation is over

and the trial is complete. The facts are clear. Philando's killer remains free, but, Mr. Speaker, I and many Americans across this Nation remain confused and dissatisfied.

Mr. Speaker, dashcam video released yesterday confirmed that Second Amendment protections simply do not apply to Black, law-abiding, concealed carry permit-holding, compliant Philando Castile. And still the NRA has had nothing to say.

Mr. Speaker, I ask again: If the NRA isn't here to protect law-abiding gun owners like Philando Castile, then just who are they here to protect?

□ 1645

STOPPING THE SCOURGE OF SEX TRAFFICKING

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, 15-year-old Bianca struggled with insecurities and depression, so she turned to social media for comfort and companionship. She met a person named Ariel, to her later displeasure, but after he brought her to a seedy motel room and forced her to watch as he raped two other girls, she knew she had walked right into the bonds of sex slavery.

Held captive, he put up advertisements about her on the notorious backpage.com, selling her to dozens of men a day. After 2 years of this hell, Bianca finally escaped, bolting from the motel room, and found safety, finding a police officer. Four days later, her trafficker was arrested and thrown behind bars.

Unlike Bianca, many victims don't escape this trafficking. That is why Senator JOHN CORNYN and I have introduced the Abolish Human Trafficking Act that increases funding for law enforcement to find and arrest traffickers like Ariel and helps restore and rescue victims.

We must use every tool in our resources we can find to help stop the scourge of human trafficking.

And that is just the way it is.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS ARE FAILING TO DO THEIR JOBS

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is not surprising that the House Republicans haven't put forward a budget, despite passing their deadline more than 2 months ago.

It has been nearly 800 days since the House Republicans agreed to a budget. Hat-tip to the Huffington Post's Matt Fuller for that fun fact.

What we are seeing is an ongoing inability of House Republicans to do their job. Republicans have introduced no jobs bill, given no indication wheth-

er they will lift the debt ceiling to avoid default, and offered no responsible spending legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this is dysfunction at its worst. The American people sent us here to deliver results on jobs, on healthcare, on security.

I urge my Republican colleagues to take that responsibility seriously and to work with Democrats to achieve progress. I know we can.

CONGRATULATING AYESHA AHSAN

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

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ayesha Ahsan, a resident of Arizona's Fifth Congressional District, who has earned a significant achievement: the Congressional Award Gold Medal. Ayesha has completed 400 hours of voluntary public service, 200 hours each of personal development and physical fitness, and a 5-day, 4-night expedition.

She is one of five Arizonans and only 373 Americans to win this prestigious award in 2017.

Ayesha volunteered at her local hospital in outpatient services, where she was responsible for registering patients who needed vital tests.

For her personal development requirement, Ms. Ahsan participated in weekly study groups with her friends to prepare for the SAT exam; and for physical fitness, she worked out at the local gym. For her expedition, she traveled to Sedona, Arizona, where she enjoyed hiking and exploration of that town.

Congratulations to Ayesha on these achievements. By completing the benchmarks for this award, Ayesha has learned perseverance and diligence, traits that will last her a lifetime.

I thank her for her example and service to our community, and I wish her well with her future endeavors.

COMMEMORATING 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPENCERTOWN FIRE COMPANY

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

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the Spencertown Fire Company, which is celebrating 100 years of service to our communities in Columbia County, New York.

Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year for the past century, this fire company has served with pride and courage. I express my gratitude for the past and present volunteers of this organization, who have made great sacrifices and performed heroic acts to protect their neighbors.

Today, 35 individuals make up the team at Spencertown Fire Company. Two-thirds of this group are active, highly skilled volunteer firemen.

Their commitment to Spencertown and its neighboring communities does

not stop at fire safety. Each year, since 1985, they have awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to a college-bound senior, chosen from within their service area.

I thank Spencertown Fire Company's President Alan Silvernale, Austerlitz Fire Chief Eric Pilkington, and the entire Spencertown Fire Company, which, in the great tradition of New York fire companies, continues to raise the standard in ensuring and furthering the well-being of our local communities.

CONTINUATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE WESTERN BALKANS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115-48)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUDD) 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 of 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 that provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the Western Balkans that was declared in Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001, is to continue in effect beyond June 26, 2017.

The threat constituted by the actions of persons engaged in, or assisting, sponsoring, or supporting (i) extremist violence in the Republic of Macedonia and elsewhere in the Western Balkans region, or (ii) acts obstructing implementation of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia or United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, in Kosovo, has not been resolved. In addition, Executive Order 13219 was amended by Executive Order 13304 of May 28, 2003, to take additional steps with respect to acts obstructing implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement of 2001 relating to Macedonia.

The acts of extremist violence and obstructionist activity outlined in these Executive Orders are hostile to United States interests and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to the Western Balkans.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, June 21, 2017.

CONTINUATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO NORTH KOREA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115-49)

The SPEAKER pro tempore 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 of 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 that provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to North Korea declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008, expanded in scope in Executive Order 13551 of August 30, 2010, addressed further in Executive Order 13570 of April 18, 2011, further expanded in scope in Executive Order 13687 of January 2, 2015, and under which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13722 of March 15, 2016, is to continue in effect beyond June 26, 2017.

The existence and risk of proliferation of weapons-usable fissile material on the Korean Peninsula; the actions and policies of the Government of North Korea that destabilize the Korean Peninsula and imperil United States Armed Forces, allies, and trading partners in the region, including its pursuit of nuclear and missile programs; and other provocative, destabilizing, and repressive actions and policies of the Government of North Korea, continue to constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to North Korea.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, June 21, 2017.

SURVIVORS OF BUS ACCIDENT IN TANZANIA AIDED BY SIOUXLAND TANZANIA EDUCATIONAL MEDICAL MINISTRIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives, this great deliberative body that we have and are, and this de-

liberative body that brings this Nation together to discuss our troubles, to discuss our triumphs, and sometimes intensely debate our disagreements here on the floor and in committee. We have seen a fair amount of that disagreement around the country.

There are a few things we see that brings this country together, and we join together in these efforts when we can be Americans, and reach out with the hand of the American heart and spirit and help others when they are in sometimes dire need and dire difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this afternoon to discuss one of these circumstances where Americans joined together and reached out their hands—not only of friendship but physically reached out their hands—to deliver the kind of medical care that saved three lives from a terrible accident that took place in Tanzania.

This terrible accident in Tanzania was worldwide news. There were 39 people on a bus in Tanzania, and all but three were students, children, 12 to 13 years old. There were two teachers and a bus driver on the bus.

From the reports that I got, the bus was going too fast. It went around a curve and reached the peak of a bump in the road, a rise in the road. The bus went airborne off the road into a ravine, and it crashed nose down in the same fashion that a plane might crash into the Earth.

Of the 39 people on the bus, 36 of them children, there were only three survivors. These three survivors were in the back of the bus, and all others in the front were thrown to the front, where the engine and the front part of the bus, all the way back to behind the driver, was jammed into the fuselage, I might call it, of the bus itself. And as that was jammed backwards, they were all thrown into that.

The three survivors were in the back, and the violence to them was cushioned, to a degree, by those who had perished in front of them. Everyone else was essentially instantly killed, and these three children by the name of Wilson and Sadia and Doreen were survivors. The bus was crushed together like a tin can.

Three vehicles behind the bus were some missionary workers who are associated with STEMM, the Siouxland Tanzania Educational Medical Ministries, which was formed in Sioux City, Iowa, and it was formed by the inspiration of a long chain of, I will say, the Hand of Providence that arranges people together. They were there in Tanzania, following the bus three vehicles behind.

Mr. Speaker, the situation there was that, as they saw the bus go off the road and crash, the bus crashed down off into the ravine; they stopped. The three of them were trained medical personnel named Kevin Nygard and Jennifer Milby and Amanda Volkens. I believe there are also a couple that I don't happen to have their names in

front of me this evening, and I don't want to leave them out, Mr. Speaker, but they raced down the bank to the ravine where the bus had crashed nose down. They knew it was a terrible accident.

I don't think they could have imagined how bad and how terrible it was, but the only way to get in that bus was through the windows in the sides, schoolbus-type windows, as we know. Most all of us are familiar with those, Mr. Speaker.

So they climbed into that bus and began to look for survivors and to try to pull the survivors out and then the bodies of those who didn't survive, and they worked frantically there with other volunteers, also, who happened to come along to the scene.

They were able to remove the three survivors that I had mentioned, Wilson and Sadia and Doreen, and lay them out on the bank. They were all medically trained, and so they were applying first aid.

These three kids, these three students, 12 to 13 years old, two girls and a boy, were then transported by ambulance into the city in Tanzania.

Now, I didn't know that this had happened, even though it was international news, but I was on an international trip as well into the Balkans. I happened to be in Bosnia at the moment in Sarajevo. I received a phone call from Dr. Steve Meyer. Steve Meyer is the founder of STEMM, the Siouland Tanzania Educational Medical Ministries.

□ 1700

His heart has gone out to Tanzania nearly 20 years ago. He spends about half of each year there doing missionary work and providing and conducting orthopaedic surgery because he is an orthopaedic surgeon. He has taught them how to farm. He is drilling wells for irrigation. He also is running an educational system there that, at least the last report I had, it was the largest nonpublic school in Tanzania.

This is all done by the drive and the inspiration and the heart of Dr. Steve Meyer and his wife, Dana. And so the people that work with him had contributed to the survival of the three students that they had helped pulled out of that bus.

Yet I received a call from Steve Meyer. I was with the charge d'affaires in Sarajevo, Bosnia, and I stepped out of that reception to take a cell phone call. When I pick up my phone and it says, "Steve Meyer," I know I better answer the call. He is a friend. He is a pheasant hunting buddy. I guess he is a neighbor in the neighborhood, not technically a constituent, but we are brothers by faith, by head, by heart, and I know the level of conviction that Steve Meyer has.

So I took his call when I stepped out of the reception, and he said: "You have already seen this on the news. I need your help. There are three students that will . . ." He said: "One,

probably two, of them will not survive if we cannot get them out of Tanzania. The third one likely will be handicapped for life, but is more likely to survive."

I know that he does orthopaedic surgery in Tanzania, and I said: "Can't you help them there? Can't you fix them there?"

And he said: "No, I can't. We don't have the equipment in Tanzania. We are not going to be able to save them unless we can get them out of Tanzania, get them back to Sioux City, where we can provide all the best medical care and perform the surgery necessary to put their bodies back together."

And that was his medical prognosis.

Now, I know from previous times that I have been around Steve Meyer, the level of conviction that he has and, of course, the depth of his heart. So I said: "I think I know what you need from me."

And he said: "Yes, their parents need to go along, too; and we want to send along a doctor and a nurse. I have only got just a little bit of time, and I am going to have to leave Tanzania, but we need to get them out of here while they are still alive."

So my job was to accelerate the visas, acquisition of visas for the three patients, the kid patients, for each one of their mothers, and for the doctor and for the nurse that needed to accompany them back to the United States, and to promote and accelerate the issuance of passports, which nobody had that needed to travel here either, and that would be a function of the Tanzanian Government and a function of something that we might be able to encourage.

So that was the easy part. It doesn't sound easy, Mr. Speaker, but it was the easy part compared to the second part of the assignment Dr. Meyer gave me. And he said: "I need a medevac plane, and we are going to have to fly them out of Tanzania in a medevac plane. I have got everything set up in Sioux City. It is at Mercy Hospital. All of us are going to donate our time, our medical care, the devices that will be used to do the reconstructive surgery. All of that is going to be provided. It is going to be at no cost, but we need to get them there and get them there fast."

So this is a high emergency. I hung up the phone and I began to make phone calls. And the fortunate thing was I was leaving Bosnia shortly to go to Macedonia. Well, I would employ the staff at the Bosnian Embassy—the U.S. Embassy in Bosnia to pull some phone numbers together for me and start the outreach on this and to accelerate the effort to get the visas, promote the passports, and get the medevac plane. I want to thank the people there at the U.S. Embassy in Bosnia for their work and their cooperation.

I shortly arrived in Macedonia, where now I had a whole new embassy team to put to work; and they did. They pulled together phone numbers and

made connections for me, too. I spoke—I believe it was from Macedonia—to the Tanzanian Embassy—the U.S. Embassy in Tanzania.

I want to thank Anthony Pagliai. Anthony Pagliai is the officer who issued the visas, and he was Johnny-on-the-spot. He couldn't have moved any more quickly or with any more conviction once I convinced him that this was for real.

And it was interesting how that happened, Mr. Speaker, that the—you know, when a congressman calls a staff person in an embassy in Tanzania, he doesn't have any way of knowing that it actually is a Member of Congress, for one thing, and what is the level of urgency and credibility of that call. But I told him I can vouch for Dr. Steve Meyer and I have known him for a long time, I know the level of his credibility and his conviction, his heart. I have spoken to that, Mr. Speaker.

I relayed that to Anthony Pagliai, and it seemed that the message wasn't clearly resonating because he didn't know of Dr. Steve Meyer. So I said to him that Steve Meyer is also working with Lazaro Nyalandu. Lazaro Nyalandu is an individual who ran for Prime Minister in Tanzania in the last election cycle—didn't win, but a fairly high name recognition within Tanzania. And when I gave Lazaro's name—you heard me hesitate already, Mr. Speaker. I have always had trouble remembering his name, but it is Nyalandu. And I hesitated on his name, but I said: "Lazaro, the Prime Minister candidate in Tanzania, is working with Dr. Meyer, and I can vouch for Dr. Meyer. I know Lazaro, and I know, if the two of them are working together, this is a credible endeavor, and you should help them in any way that you can."

And he finished up and he gave me Lazaro's last name. He volunteered it: Nyalandu. He said: "We know him. He was the only candidate for Prime Minister that actually answered our phone calls."

So I knew that he had a good relationship with the U.S. Embassy and that they had all of the incentive to move forward to expedite the visas. And I asked Anthony: "Find me also a medevac plane."

Well, that was a very big request for somebody that is in the business of issuing visas for travel. And he said he would go to work on that, but I knew it was very difficult.

So with the confidence that the visas would be moved expeditiously and that the encouragement to deliver the passports would be supported out of the U.S. Embassy, I moved on to begin looking for a medevac plane while the course of his lifesaving techniques were going on in the hospital in Tanzania, trying to save the lives of these three badly broken bodies.

Mr. Speaker, as I move then from Macedonia to Albania, I have been continually making phone calls trying to find a medevac plane. I talked to the

White House. I talked to the West Wing of the White House, and in particular, communicated with Steve Bannon and others who then did the outreach to the Department of Defense and went so far as to check with Stuttgart, where they command AFRICOMs out of Stuttgart, Germany. The assets to do this didn't really exist in an available way.

I reached even further into a security company that I worked with as head of my security in the Middle East, in Iraq and in Afghanistan, and they found a plane. This plane was sitting on the tarmac in the Middle East. It could have gone down. It was set up well enough to be a medevac plane, but the price, because it was a leased plane, was \$300,000.

So I told them: "I don't think I want to spend that amount of money out of my kids' inheritance. I am not sure we could raise it to replace it, but put that plane on hold because I want to make some more phone calls and see if there is a better alternative."

I kept making phone calls, and at about 4 o'clock in that afternoon, in a little back street in Albania, I had a phone call connection with Reverend Franklin Graham.

And I want to give credit in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to Elizabeth Soderholm, who was a staff person out of our U.S. Embassy in Albania, who made sure that that phone call made connection as the cell signals were bad and the batteries were going down, nearly down on my phone. We made the connection with hers, so I dialed, and I got an answer from Reverend Franklin Graham.

And over the course of less than a 5-minute conversation altogether, over the course of about 3 minutes, I explained the situation to him. And Reverend Franklin Graham of Samaritan's Purse said: "I have a DC-8 that I can fly and move them out of Tanzania to Sioux City, Iowa. I am willing to do that. I want to help."

And I said: "Reverend Graham, I don't know that I can raise the money for that."

And he said: "You don't have to. We will take care of it."

And at that moment I knew that we had the problem solved and we had a reasonable chance to save these three kids.

So, of course, I thanked him effusively. I texted Dr. Meyer's number to Franklin Graham, and Franklin Graham's number to Dr. Meyer. I said to each one of them: "Call each other right away so that you can make this connection and get this plane set up and dispatched to evacuate these three patients out of Tanzania."

And Dr. Meyer had no idea this was going on. He was 30 minutes from boarding his commercial flight out of Tanzania to come back to Iowa. Because of the obligations he had, he could not have stayed. And the phone rang, he answered it, and it was on the other end: "This is Franklin Graham, and I want to help."

And that is when Steve Meyer knew that the problems, the difficulties were going to be resolved. In any case, at that point they set up the logistics. The plane arrived in Tanzania, boarded these patients out of there, and flew them back to the United States—not without incident, but back to the United States.

Again, I am very grateful for all the people involved here. And I want to let this CONGRESSIONAL RECORD know, Mr. Speaker, that the driving force behind this was Dr. Steve Meyer. And it has been his heart to help the people of Tanzania for two decades, and anybody that has been around him like I have been, my pheasant hunting buddy, and the times that Marilyn and I have been involved in the fundraising efforts that go on with STEMM and Sioux City, you just know. You want to make sure that he is going to get it done. So why not make it as easy as possible on him and knowing that, when that calling comes from above, you answer that call?

So I wanted to point out some things here on the posters. This is how this came together. These pictures were taken, I believe, 2½ weeks ago, maybe 3½ weeks ago, but the accident took place May 6. So within a couple of weeks of the accident, they had finished the surgery of our three victims here.

Mr. Speaker, I will say, among these three, there were five broken arms and at least, I believe, three broken legs. There were two fractured spines. There were 17 broken bones altogether. There was a broken jaw over here in Doreen. And this is a fractured spine in her neck. And this is Sadia. And Wilson had a fractured femur.

And when you add this all up, it would have been—I guess I better not necessarily point out which one, but both of these girls were at great risk of death in Tanzania and likely would not have made it. Wilson here in the middle likely would have survived, but he had a fractured femur where, in Tanzania, would have required that they amputate his leg at the hip.

And now, as of a week ago Saturday, I went up to the Sioux City Bandits' football game—indoor football—and they were co-captains for the team, for the playoff game that took place that Saturday night. They wheeled all three of them out to the middle of the field for the coin toss. And after that, they came back, and we had a little stage on the end where we watched the game from the stage.

And they look a little fresher and more alert that night than they do in these pictures, Mr. Speaker, but they are now happy. Their parents are delighted and very grateful.

This is Dr. Steve Meyer here in the picture, and I just can't say enough about a man who inspires everyone around him and makes things happen by force of will and faith that would not and, we would think, could not happen otherwise.

And then of the patients here, Wilson is the one that cracks me up the most. On that Saturday night, this young fellow who would have, by now, lost his leg up at the hip, I leaned down and I said to him: "Wilson, is what I heard about you yesterday true?"

And he looked at me and smiled a little bit, and said: "Well, what?"

And I said: "Did you really kick a ball yesterday? Did you stand up and kick a ball?"

And he got this grin on his face and said: "Yes."

So that is how far this has come. This is a happy result, Mr. Speaker, and I wanted to also show the picture. Here is Wilson and his mother. I will give you an example. He has got this ready smile. He is not the only one of the crew with a ready smile, but he has got a great ready smile. And part of it is he had got a big wound in his head that you don't see in the picture, too, but it doesn't suppress the grin on his face.

And we did a little press conference there. It was the first time he had been out of a hospital room. The only thing he had seen in America was the inside of a hospital room, and then wheeled down the hallway to the reception area of the hospital. And he is there with the two girls in their wheelchairs. That was also taken the same day.

□ 1715

And the press asked him: "What is it you like best about America?"

Well, the only thing he had seen of America was the inside of the hospital, and he smiled and he said: "Everything."

And they asked him: "What is your favorite food here?" And he said: "Everything."

And they asked him only one more question: "Is there anything else you would like to say, Wilson?" And he said: "Thank you."

And that is something that the parents have been saying ever since, the three mothers that are here and the doctor and the nurse that are here also to take care of them.

They are now out of the hospital. They are at Ronald McDonald House there in Sioux City. They have been taking them out on occasion to get some fresh air and see what normal life is in our part of the country. And you can just see the heart, and Steve Meyer here in this poster.

I would be remiss if I didn't have this poster up also tonight, Mr. Speaker. This is Samaritan's Purse. This is the DC-8 that Reverend Franklin Graham dispatched to fly our three patients out of Tanzania and into Sioux City, Iowa.

These are the people that have gathered at the departure wondering if they are ever going to see these three Tanzanian kids again. Many of these people would be people that were at the state funeral for the 36 who were killed in that bus accident. Tens of thousands came to the stadium as those 36 caskets were all lined up side by side, and

the nation went into mourning in Tanzania because of that terrible loss that they had and the tragedy that was there, that was commemorated by the attendance of tens of thousands. Probably over 100,000 Tanzanians came to their soccer stadium for that huge funeral that they had. And now some of them come to the airstrip to see these three survivors, these miracle kids from Tanzania be flown off to the United States.

I can only imagine what it is like in their mind's eye, what they imagine is happening with their three children that have been flown over here to the United States.

And the father of one of these patients said to Dr. Meyer: "Why? Why? Why?" And Dr. Meyer said: "Well, what do you mean 'why?'"

"Why do you do this? Why are you willing to do this for our children?"

And his answer is: "We are Christians and we are Americans. That's why."

And so it is the head and the heart of our country, our people. It does come to us to reach out and lift others up and help them. We can't help them all. We can't save them all. But every once in a while, there is a cry out and a need for a chain of individual miracles linked together.

Without a connection, by the way, between Steve Meyer and Lazaro, who met years ago when Lazaro was going to college in Iowa, Lazaro Nyalandu—as he went to college in Iowa, he was brought together by Steve Meyer's pastor and then Steve Meyer, and they got to know each other and they became friends. And because of that relationship, Steve Meyer went to Tanzania and became one of the lead people on mission to Tanzania. If it hadn't been for that, he never would have formed STEMM.

The Siouland Tanzania Educational Medical Ministry would have never been formed had it not been for that connection more than 20 years ago. And if it had never been formed, the workers wouldn't have been behind the bus when it went off the road, and, likely, everybody would have perished in that bus rather than all but three. If they hadn't been behind the bus, we would have not heard about the injuries that they had and wouldn't have had the connection to fly them back to the United States.

I don't know Lazaro myself. I don't have that to use to convince Anthony Pagiliai that this is a credible act. Now, he might have done it anyway. His head and his heart sounds good to me, too, but it helped to have that series of networks already built.

I bring this up, Mr. Speaker, because I want people to know, the people that are listening here, and especially young people as they form and shape their lives, that networking is worth a lot. You can be the smartest person in the world with the best intentions in the world, but if you don't have relationships with people so that you can communicate, that you can share

ideas, that you can connect and team up on projects, then you can't get a lot done.

The smartest person in the world in a phone book hasn't had much effect on our society. But people with good convictions and good relationships and positive attitudes and a good heart can get a lot done that is good if they are connected with the right people.

So I just encourage, especially, young people: Go out there and build those networks. Build them while you are young. Build them while you are in school, when you are in K-12, when you are in college, when you are after college, when you are building those networks of young people that are going into the profession together. And understand that 40 years later you are still going to have friends that you can call on to produce a good and positive result if you build those relationships and those networks, not be reclusive. Push yourself out there and build friendships with people. And that multiplied itself over and over again.

By the way, I am grateful that Franklin Graham took my call and I carried enough credibility that that actually worked that way, too. That is another piece of networking. But I can't thank Reverend Franklin Graham enough.

I remember sitting in my living room watching a black-and-white TV while Billy Graham was preaching and calling for an altar call, and that is a little bit of how we grew up in our family, clear back then when TVs were black-and-white.

And now, his son, Reverend Franklin Graham, took a phone call from me from Albania that resulted in a DC-8 being dispatched to fly these three patients out of Tanzania to Sioux City, Iowa, where they received surgery that repaired 17 broken bones and, by the way, with all of the medical devices donated by the company that produced them as well.

When I look at this, Doreen was paralyzed, particularly in her right leg, and there was no confidence as to whether she would ever be able to have any feeling in that leg or ever be able to walk again. Today she has feeling in that leg. She has some movement in that leg, and my level of confidence that she will walk again is pretty high right now. All the other prayers have been answered; why not this one?

I think the day comes when these three arrive back in Tanzania, and I will predict the date. I think it will be the 18th or 19th of August that they will be flown back to Tanzania, and I believe that these three patients, with their mothers with them, will walk down the steps off that plane onto the soil of Tanzania; and I believe that there will be tens of thousands of Tanzanians there to welcome them back home again.

The completion of this series of miracles that came about because one person, Steve Meyer, had the right head and heart at all times, and he had the

right networks, with people like Lazaro Nyalandu and people working in our U.S. Embassies like Anthony Pagiliai and Elizabeth Soderholm, who set up that call, and our Ambassadors within each of those places that promoted and allowed this to happen, including Ambassador Lu and also Ambassador Baily, whom I worked with.

I got the good news when I was in Kosovo that it was going to be, it was likely to be completed then, that they had reached that transaction. I called it a transaction. They had put together the logistics so that the plane was going to go and pick them up.

I found myself then at the Vatican shortly after that, and kind of as maybe a little extra frosting on the cake, I was offered the opportunity to do the Bible reading at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican that Sunday. I don't know how that came to me unless it was just a little reward from God that said, "Well done, well done," by a lot of people.

These young people are now reconstructed. Their reconstructive surgery is completed, and they are on the mend. Two of the three are standing and walking and getting stronger, and each of them are taking physical therapy, and their attitudes are good. Their pain levels are down, and the projection is that, by mid to late August, they will be ready to go back to Tanzania.

That is an American success story, Mr. Speaker, and it is one that I am happy to relay here on the floor of the House of Representatives and deliver the credit to so many people who did so much to make this work, particularly Dr. Steve Meyer, but all of that for three kids in Tanzania for whom it is a miracle that they survived the bus accident.

Now, for their futures, the three miracle kids of Tanzania have a legacy to live up to. I expect that in years going forward, 10 and 20 and 30 and 40 years from now, wherever they go in the world, especially in Tanzania, they will be known as the Tanzanian miracle kids, the ones who survived against such improbable odds.

Out of them should come the kind of ambassadorship that links together Tanzania and the United States, and who knows what gets built that helps them help themselves; who knows how much of their own agriculture will be expanded so they can raise their own food; who knows how much of their educational system will be built out because of the inspiration that can come from young people whose lives have been saved by the technology and education that we have here; who knows how much of their spirit of faith is going to be bolstered by the good hearts of people that only wanted to do something good, only wanted to reach out their hand and help.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am very happy and grateful that this story is on its way to a very happy conclusion, and I can't say enough about the children, about

the mothers who expressed their gratitude at the game.

One of the mothers continued to always offer some little chicken strips for my granddaughter, my 10-year-old granddaughter, Rachel, to eat. Rachel couldn't quite understand why she was supposed to be eating all the time. And whenever Rachel would take a bite of it, then she would hear: "You like? You like?"

And I said: "Well, Rachel, it is because there are only a few words in English that this girl's mother knows, and she wants to open up a conversation with you, and so she's offering you food. That is a way of her expressing gratitude, not only to us, but to our country, and a way of having a conversation and communicating." And so it was a good experience for Rachel, too.

But I can't say enough about Reverend Franklin Graham, Samaritan's Purse, this effort that is global, that didn't hesitate. Again, it was not a 5-minute conversation between me and Reverend Franklin Graham that was able to set up this transportation; and the conversation with Franklin Graham and Dr. Steve Meyer, not very technical. It is: "Where are they?" "What do we need to do?" "How are we going to figure out how to get there?" "Can we set the plane up to be a medevac plane?" He had expressed that also in the phone call with me.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a story that is on the way to a very, very happy conclusion, and I hope sometime, maybe in September, I can come back to the floor and report on the return of the Tanzanian miracle kids to Tanzania and, hopefully, I will have some pictures then of the crowd that is bound to be gathered together in a great celebratory event to counteract, or to be juxtaposed against the terrible, terrible tragedy of that bus accident that killed 36. It was 33 students and 2 of the teachers and the bus driver. Only these three children survived, and they survived because they were at the back of the bus when the bus landed on its nose.

So 17 broken bones, 2 broken spines, 5 or 6 fractured arms, and 3 or 4 of the legs were fractured in one bone or another.

Also, I should say that Dr. Quentin Durward was the neurosurgeon who did a lot of that technical work on the spines along with Dr. Steve Meyer, and he is one, also, who I know that his head and heart are in the right place.

I know that I have left off many, many of the medical providers at Mercy Hospital in Sioux City who donated their time and are so dedicated to this. I regret that I didn't have a list to read into the RECORD, Mr. Speaker. But I also want to express my gratitude to those whom I left off the list.

With that, I believe that I should conclude my presentation here on the Tanzanian miracle kids and, again, thank all of those who are involved and transition my discussion over to a few

other things that are part of the current concerns here in America.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I want to transition over to the shooting last Wednesday at the practice ballfield in Alexandria.

I want to thank everyone across this country who offered their prayers for the recovery of all of those who were injured in this shooting and especially our whip, our majority whip, STEVE SCALISE.

His nickname for me and mine for him for years has been "Scrapper." We just call each other "Scrapper."

Well, we know, STEVE SCALISE is a scrapper. He is a fighter. He took an awfully hard hit last Wednesday, and it did significant damage to him. All of the medical reports that we have been getting after the first 36 hours or so have been of improvement in his condition.

□ 1730

I don't suppose—and I say this for STEVE's benefit—I don't suppose LSU's loss in the College World Series the other night by a score of 13-to-1 improved his condition that much, but he is a baseball player and a baseball fan, and he is a very dedicated LSU fan. They are still in the College World Series, as I understand it, and it is a double-elimination tournament. So they are the leaders in the loser's bracket, so to speak. So they have got a chance to battle back and still win.

But he is battling back, and he is a winner, and his strength is coming back. The day will come when he comes to this floor to cast a vote. I don't know how long that is going to be, Mr. Speaker, but I can only anticipate the cheers of joy that this House of Representatives will utter when the day comes that STEVE SCALISE comes back to this floor to vote, to count votes.

He is the vote counter for the majority in this House of Representatives. That is one of the most important jobs in this place. If you bring a bill to the floor and you can't produce the votes to get it to pass, it is a pretty heavy embarrassment, and STEVE SCALISE has gotten that art down pretty well.

I always want to make that job as easy for him as I can, provided I agree with him on the policy, of course. But STEVE SCALISE, whether you agree with him on the policy or whether you don't, he has the personal support and the prayers of a vast majority of the Members here on this floor, and across this country.

He is an individual who you have got to like him, you have got to like him personally. He is engaging. He is sociable. He makes sure that there is a meal back there for us on first votes of the week, and he is the host in the Lincoln room in front of the Lincoln fireplace where Lincoln used to sit back in the day as well.

His two kids and his wife are also certainly near him whenever they can

be and by his bedside whenever they can be. It is a time when the family is going through a fair amount of grief and stress, too.

But STEVE SCALISE isn't the only story in this, and that would be that Matt Mika, the lobbyist for Tyson Foods, was the second-most seriously injured in the shootings last Wednesday. And without describing his wounds here in the RECORD, I just want to make sure the RECORD knows, Mr. Speaker, that it was a very serious wound that Matt Mika took, and his recovery looks positive at this point. It is also one of those things that, day by day, gets a little better.

But each one of these individuals, STEVE SCALISE and Matt Mika, had it been a different scenario, if it had been a more remote location, without an almost immediate medevac by helicopter out of there and to the hospital, I am going to say that if they had been in a remote location, we likely would have lost them both.

It is attempted murder by a fellow that we don't need to bring charges against now because he has gone to the morgue. And his death is as a result of the two officers who were there providing the security for STEVE SCALISE: Crystal Griner, I believe her name was, and also David Bailey.

One of the most uplifting things that I have seen was at the Congressional Baseball Game last Thursday night at the Nationals Park, when I saw Joe Torre come out to the mound, and I thought he was going to throw out the first pitch, and then they introduced—it was either Roberto Clemente's son or grandson, he was also at the mound—but then this fellow came out on crutches that had one leg up off the ground. And as he went out there, I realized who it was: David Bailey; the man who had actually taken the shooter out just the day before and took a wound himself in the leg came to the ball game on crutches and went out to the mound. He handed over one of those crutches, leaned on the other one, and threw out the first pitch.

It was a tremendous moment. It was the best moment of the evening, Mr. Speaker. It was the equivalent of Neil Diamond going back to the Red Sox stadium after the Boston bombing and singing "Sweet Caroline" at the seventh-inning stretch.

Those things, when we see that, have got a lot more meaning than just throwing a ball into home plate or singing a song at the seventh-inning stretch. It is something that uplifts and motivates all of us and should unify all of us together.

This ghastly attempted killing that took place by Hodgkinson was something that—we don't doubt that some of it was ginned up by the hatred and the vitriol that is part of the vernacular and part of the public arena today in politics. More examination of his Facebook page and his other communications and people who were

around him will go on as we try to understand what motivated this man, but there is no question it was political.

I believe that he was radicalized by the political dialogue that has been taking place in this country. And that radicalization took place in a way, in his mind, that we won't understand. I remember Speaker PELOSI saying that everybody is not as stable as we are, and that words weigh a ton on people who aren't stable, and sometimes they are motivated into violence.

That doesn't mean we can prevent the violence by preventing the dialogue, but it does mean that when we clash, we should clash on policy. We should disagree on policy and the best method to bring this policy forward, but it should not be personal. We should not be demonizing the other side.

There is going to be a disagreement in ideology. Our Founding Fathers understood that. They set up this competition here in this Congress to drain the stress off of the streets of America. And one of the results here is that we come to this place, on the floor of this House, and when we disagree, we don't challenge the motive of the person we disagree with. We challenge the ideas, and we try to present better ideas. And the best ideas are to prevail in the mind of the public.

That is how it was designed to be. That is why every 2 years we have an election here, and why there are no appointments to the House of Representatives. Everybody that has a vote card in this place, all 435 of us, that is a vote card earned in an election; not one that has been handed by a Governor's appointment, for example, which is the case in the Senate, from time to time, when there is a vacancy.

But we are elected every 2 years, and our Founding Fathers looked at this and said: We are going to be the hot cup of coffee—or hot cup of tea, perhaps, is what they were referencing at the time—so we could react quickly to the will of the people.

But the saucer that it cools in is the Senate—6-year elections instead of 2—so that the hot ideas that come here to the House of Representatives can be tempered in the cooling saucer of the 6-year terms in the Senate.

But it was about bringing ideas here, bringing them here quickly with the elections every 2 years for every one of us, every 2 years, and then those fresh ideas then wash across over to the Senate, and the Senate is designed to step back and take a look, and a deep breath, and then, with the judgment of both bodies, come together and conference committee, and conference report, and send those results to the President of the United States—elected every 4 years—who is, of course, the Commander in Chief, commands our military, has a full authority to do all kinds of things, Mr. Speaker.

But the point I want to make is this: During the ObamaCare debate in 2010, in that March period of time, when this

Capitol was surrounded by the American people, and encircled, and they were six to eight people deep in a human doughnut around the Capitol—not just a human chain where you touched people and reached out as far as you could—six or eight deep, packed together all the way around the Capitol.

By the way, there are no pictures of that human doughnut around the Capitol, because there was no airspace allowed for anything to fly up there and take pictures of us standing around in that fashion. But during that period of time, I had walked from the Judiciary Committee over here to the House of Representatives. And on the way, I came by a lady who I had seen in the gallery of the Judiciary Committee quite a number of times, and I had never talked to her. But as I walked by her, I felt compelled to speak to her, Mr. Speaker.

And as I did, she said: You have got to stop arguing. You have got to stop debating. You have got to get to a compromise. You have got to get to a compromise and move on. We can't have these arguments in our country. We can't have this kind of stress, this kind of pressure.

And I hadn't answered a question of anybody the same as I did that day. I answered her differently, Mr. Speaker. And it just kind of clicked in my mind, and I said to her: Did you ever think that because we come to this city together, and we debate our disagreements here in open debate, and we air out our beliefs and our convictions, and we weigh our options, and we bring new ideas in, and we churn those ideas, did you ever think that because we do that this way in America, that it keeps us from being at each other's throats and fighting each other in the streets of America?

And I know that was how it was designed to be, to drain off that hot-bloodedness that comes through debate, and by public—not only by debate but by legitimate elections that reflect the voices and the will of the people. It is the biggest thing that keeps us from having revolutions in America. We have them. We have them every 2 years when we have an election. They are, in a way, a revolution.

New ideas come here. We weigh those ideas. We cast our votes. We change the policy. We adjust to the will of the American people, and that keeps us from having revolutions in the street of America.

But how long will that last, Mr. Speaker? How long can that last in a country where we had a legitimate election last November 8, and there is that ever-growing group of people who seem to be denying the very results of our legitimate election?

The constitutionally elected President of the United States is Donald J. Trump, and it is not an arguable or refutable point. You can say that Hillary Clinton won more popular vote than Donald Trump. Well, that is like say-

ing, the Packers beat the Bears, but the Bears ran up more yards than the Packers, so they don't have a legitimate win. They are not playing by the rules on the football field of who runs up the most total yards. It is who has the most points on the scoreboard.

You can run the ball up and down the field, but if you can't get across the goal line, or kick it through the uprights, or if you can't score a safety, you don't score. And if you don't score and the other team does, you lose. If they score more than you do, you still lose. And that is how this constitutional election takes place, Mr. Speaker, is by the rules; the rules that are written into our Constitution and have been barely altered over more than 200 years because they were so wisely put in place.

The electoral college decides the President of the United States, and the ballots are cast here on the floor of the House of Representatives, and that is the official tally that rings up who is the President of the United States.

There is no part of this process that is legitimately refuted by the other side. Yet, they say, we are the resistance. And the loser in the last Presidential election wants to be the leader of the resistance—the leader of the resistance, and one who has looked for a lot of reasons why she is not the President of the United States.

And I would quote CHUCK GRASSLEY on how you define that. In one of his elections years ago—this is a back-channel story about him, but he is a person I admire and have a great affection for, a senior Senator from Iowa, now the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee—they continually asked him when he was first elected to the Federal office here: "Why did you win? Why did you win?"

And he didn't want to say anything anymore. He was just happy enough with the victory. And finally, as he walked away from the press, they said: "But, Mr. Grassley, why did you win?"

And he turned, and he said: "I got more votes than the other guy." And he walked away.

Well, that is a pretty good point, CHUCK GRASSLEY. And in this case, Donald Trump got more electoral votes than his opponent. That is why he won. But he earned those legitimately by elections within the States that converted those electoral votes to his side. That is how it is supposed to be.

And to deny that then subverts the constitutional results of an elected President. It subverts the mandate that comes with the election of a President. It diminishes the credibility of our constitutionally structured government that is there, and it bogs down our process.

So when I see demonstrations in the streets, Mr. Speaker, that say "the resistance" in the front, and then there is another big banner up there that says, "be ungovernable," we don't want to be an ungovernable people, Mr. Speaker. We want to be a governable

people. And when we elect a President, and when we elect Senators and House Members, and our offices in the States for our State representatives and our State senators, when we elect our Governors, when we elect our other constitutional officers who are there, we need to respect the results of that, and give them their respect, and let them do their jobs.

I especially want to encourage them, keep your campaign promises. Follow through on those campaign promises. But when we have masses of people in the streets who go out to demonstrate against the results of a legitimate election, we start to look like the Third World.

Can't we have, on both sides of the aisle—can't we have Republicans over here and Democrats over here, and leftists over on the extreme there, and some Conservatives over here—that I think are as constitutional as myself—can't we have them respect the system enough to respect the duly elected Representatives who are there, including, and especially, the President of the United States so that there are not demonstrations in the streets?

In this city the next day, Mr. Speaker, 600,000 to 700,000 people swarmed the streets of this city in equal or greater numbers than those who came to witness the inauguration, to protest against the inauguration against the newly inaugurated President Trump.

□ 1745

Six to 700,000, the majority of them, were women wearing these knitted pink hats, carrying around some of the most vulgar signs I have seen anywhere—in fact, the most vulgar signs I have seen anywhere—protesting against the inauguration of the President of the United States.

Why?

I talked to a lot of them—more of them than it was probably wise, Mr. Speaker—but I did take them down to this: that you are obstructing and subverting the constitutional results of this election, and if you want to live in a free country, if you want to live in a constitutional Republic, and if you want to be able to receive and earn the benefits of the free enterprise system that we have, the rule of law that we have, the constitutional government that we have, this American spirit that is a can-do spirit that brings the vigor of the planet here to America and that employs their industriousness, grows our GDP, and contributes to the living standard in America, if you want all that to happen, then you can't be obstructing the results of elections because we will end up in the Third World.

If you destroy the rule of law in America by protesting in the streets and being ungovernable and if you are an ungovernable people, then we are not going to be a constitutional Republic forever.

Remember what Ben Franklin said when they came out of the Constitu-

tional Convention in Philadelphia and a woman asked him: What have you given us?

His answer was: A Republic, Madam, if you can keep it.

Well, we have kept it for a long time, and we need to continue to keep it.

Ronald Reagan told us that freedom doesn't last more than a generation. It has to be fought for and it has to be defended.

We have fought for it and we have defended it. We also now have to defend it in the minds and in the hearts of the American people. If we fail to teach our young people the value of this constitutional Republic, if we fail to teach them the continuation of the history of this great Nation that we are blessed to be part of, then eventually they will build a disrespect. They are already building it in many of the colleges and universities across the land. That disrespect turns into contempt, and that contempt turns into, sometimes, violence in the streets that shuts down freedom of speech in America.

Charles Murray got drummed off the stage, and he couldn't give a speech because they disagreed with what they think he is going to say. That happens also to others along the way who aren't able to deliver the speeches they want to deliver.

Brigitte Gabriel is a proud Americanized citizen who lived in a bunker in Lebanon while they were trying to kill her because she is a Christian. She had been bombed multiple times and she was wounded in that process. As a little girl, she watched television on battery-operated black-and-white TV. She saw "Bonanza" and "Dallas" and some of the other programs that showed about the quality and the character of American life. She understood that we are a people. And she said this just last Wednesday morning, right after we learned of the shooting: that she learned as a little girl, 8 to 10 years old, watching television that Americans are people that can disagree without having that break down into violence or without hurling accusations and insults at the person we disagree with, that we are a people that have a quality of our character that we can disagree with each other and do so and still be friends and respect the opinions of the other.

That is one of those things that keep this Republic going and keeps it successful. But I am watching it digress. I am watching as people more often hurl insults and throw a tantrum instead of listening to a position and then issuing the counterpoints. In fact, that happened today in the Judiciary Committee. I will let others look that up for now, Mr. Speaker, but when our emotions rule our intellect, then we start to devolve towards Third World. When our intellect controls our emotions, then the age of reason can continue to improve and achieve.

We are a country that has a foundation of blessings in it. Some of that foundation is the foundation of West-

ern civilization itself. The dominant component of Western civilization is the United States of America. If we let the rest of the world be subsumed by other sets of values that don't respect the success of Western civilization, then eventually the part that we are able to hold together here will be less because we will have fewer allies around the world. Eventually we will be surrounded by other ideologies that will want to consume or supplant us here in America.

So I want our children to know, Mr. Speaker, that this gift that is America is rooted in the pillars of American exceptionalism whose roots are in Western civilization and our rule of law. It is so essential that we restore that rule of law here in America.

You can trace the rule of law back to old England. One of the places that you can see that is just go down the road to Jamestown here in Virginia. Go there and look at the site where the Jamestown settlers landed. There, one of the first buildings they built was a church. But even before that, Mr. Speaker, they planted a cross there on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean where you can look across to the east to the old country, to England. There, they knelt and offered a prayer.

I think it would take me a little too long to call that up on my iPhone. I don't have it committed to memory. But they understood the destiny. They understood the gift of America. They understood the destiny to spread our freedom—freedom of religion—but spread also would be evangelism for the world. That prayer is so profound that I will grab that and put that into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a little bit later, Mr. Speaker. It is one of the first things they did at Jamestown.

Additionally, inside that church they built—and now there is a church that has been built just outside the old foundation that they laid at that time so you can walk inside of the church and stand there and see the old foundation of the church that was built maybe not in 1607, but very close to 1607—there is a poster, a sign inside. It is fitting that it is on the east wall of the inside of the church. It says: Here in this place, in 1607, English common law came to the New World.

It is a profound thing to stand there and read and understand that is what that meant to the earliest settlers in America: English common law arrived, the rule of law arrived with them.

That rule of law, what was it rooted in?

It is rooted in—once you go back to old England, you can trace the law to the Romans who occupied. And that Roman law can be traced all the way back to the birth of Christ and before. And that Roman law also can be traced back through Greece, who shared a fair amount of that respect and rule of law that they had to be successful nations, they had to have a rule of law.

It can be traced, then, from the Romans and the Greeks back to Moses

himself. Mosaic law is the foundation for law in America, and it is traceable. The Greek philosophers and the leaders in Greece would talk about the rule of law. They would be sometimes teased and ridiculed by some of their competitors. They would say: "That is not your thoughts. You borrowed that from Moses. That is Mosaic law. I can hear it in your voice. I know that is where it came from."

Mosaic law was traced to Greece and Rome, and from Rome then on to Western Europe where the Romans occupied much of that all the way to England and beyond. That is where the rule of law came from.

One of the pillars of American exceptionalism is the rule of law. If you would pull that out of the equation of the history of the United States of America, you would end up with an entirely different country, an entirely different culture, and an entirely different structure here.

We respect the law. We don't have police officers that pull us over because they need money for their children and accept a bribe because they said that you were speeding. If any of that happens, we look at their badge number, and that officer is soon out of a job. We clean our society up of those kinds of things. But that is not the case in Third World countries. They know what *mordida* means south of the border. That happens in country after country. But here, we respect the law.

We have open meetings laws where the function of government is out in the open so the public can be in and participate. That is rooted clear back in the Greek city-states.

I recall going into the National Archives to take a look and stand and gaze at the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, where you can get your hand within 8 inches of that parchment where they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. As I waited to step before the Declaration, there was a display of the artifacts from the Greek city-states where they would gather together all of the eligible-age men—at that time it was only men, but, of course, now, today, we fixed that—but as they would gather them together, they would all have a voice.

They had a situation where there would be what they would call demagogues. The Greek demagogues would be those who were so skillful in their oratorical skills that they could wind up the emotions of the other Greeks and sometimes get them to stampede in the wrong direction. If they consistently stampeded their fellow citizens in an ill-logical direction, eventually they would say—I don't know what the name would be of the Greek individual, but maybe it would be like: Demetrius is causing too much trouble for us, we are going to have to blackball him.

So if the demagogue was too effective and caused too much damage to the public policy, then they would go through, there would be one door there

that you would vote in, and the next door would be the discard door. Each voter, each citizen, would get a white and a black marble. They would cast their ballot, blackball that Greek demagogue and banish him from the city-state.

There is much that is rooted as part of this country that is rooted back in this era. We need to teach it and we need to have respect for each other.

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

THE TERROR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CHENEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, last week, as we are all too aware, a gunman opened fire on Members of Congress and staff assistants as they were practicing for the annual bipartisan baseball game to raise money for a Washington-based charity. Among those who were injured is my dear friend and colleague, Congressman STEVE SCALISE, the House majority whip.

As news of this event came in right before our weekly Nebraska breakfast, a 74-year tradition—by the way, a bipartisan tradition in which the entire Nebraska delegation gets together on a weekly basis and invites anyone from our home State to gather with us. As that was about to occur, I heard the news of the shootings. I felt bewildered, shocked, and numb.

As further reports came in from my colleagues throughout the morning, I heard that STEVE was playing second base at the time of his shooting. He crawled from the infield, leaving a trail of blood.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't a movie. These are not distant figures. These are our friends and our colleagues, people who work right here in this institution. Representative SCALISE and I frequently interact on the nuances of policy, and sometimes differences of policy. No matter what our disagreements—and believe me, there are hard differences even on one side of the political aisle. No matter what the differences might be, STEVE always has worked with me in a cordial, professional, constructive, and, perhaps most importantly, gentlemanly manner. That is just who he is. So regardless of what anyone may think of his policies, of his political point of view, Congress, or the GOP, he did not deserve to be shot.

As noted by Senator RAND PAUL, who was also at the practice, were it not for the courageous Capitol Hill Police officers who accompanied Representative SCALISE to events, this would have been a massacre. Were it not for the first responders from the Alexandria Police Department and Fire and Rescue, many of those injured, for them it could have been much, much worse.

My heart goes out to STEVE SCALISE and the others who were injured in this tragic event.

However, my words cannot stop here. For years now, across multiple administrations and across party lines, we have seen accelerating political rancor in our country that goes way beyond normal partisan politics. It is hard to get your mind around some of the stuff that people write. It is awful. It goes beyond just pointed language. It is now so frequent, so violent, and so directly threatening that security personnel are working overtime to keep up with it.

Madam Speaker, you know this. Many good men and women of differing political perspectives work in the United States Congress. These are people who have accomplished important things in their own home communities and decided that their heart was calling them to serve in a broader capacity.

□ 1800

I fully recognize that Washington, D.C., can seem elitist and aloof, but as you know, Madam Speaker, Members of Congress are real people, with real families, from real places across our land. Sure, there may be a disproportionate share of lawyers in the institution, but there are also nurses, social workers, doctors, teachers, and small-business owners.

In fact, one of the doctors, Representative BRAD WENSTRUP, a friend of mine, happened to be at the baseball practice. He is an Iraq veteran and surgeon. He attended to STEVE SCALISE's gunshot wound, thankfully.

Above all, all of these persons are Americans. Nevertheless, there is a limit to what the human person, even a paid public servant, can absorb. We can take the violent words, but when it spills into violent action, it is too much. This country cannot continue to rip itself apart like this.

Madam Speaker, there is one additional difficulty here that needs to be unpacked. There is a real risk and vulnerability in what I call regularizing this response, in making it like a "new normal."

In fact, within only a few hours of the shootings, certain national media had begun to routinize the tragedy, as they returned to obsessing on the latest crisis du jour in Washington, as if nothing fundamentally destructive to all that we hold dear as Americans had just occurred. And why not? As the media tells us, the assassin was a "troubled man," a "lone wolf," with a "history of violence" and "easy access to guns," who was likely "mentally ill." Nothing unique to see here.

Madam Speaker, these were not our thoughts after the assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan or the shooting of Democratic Arizona Congresswoman Gabby Giffords of Arizona. When President Kennedy was shot, I am told, it was as if the entire world came to a halt.

If we are now going to move beyond words and normalize the violent targeting of people just because they

choose public service, hold views that are different from our own, or speak in a style that is not to our liking, there is no country.

I find it particularly jarring that the widely praised theatrical assassination of President Trump at a rendition of Julius Caesar in New York City's Central Park—underwritten, by the way, by The New York Times—continues to go on.

Madam Speaker, violence is violence. When it is here and it is political, of course, it is particularly jarring.

Tragically, we also may be growing used to the idea of terror abroad. Although its root causes are different than those of domestic political attacks here on our own shores, the same thing is at stake: the very principles of civilization itself.

Madam Speaker, let me digress for a moment, because this is particularly notable.

After 9/11, crime all but vanished from the streets of New York City. In other words, the shock and the horror caused a community to rally together above any social discord in a spirit of true unity. We glimpsed that same spirit of solidarity as a nation when Obama bin Laden was finally confronted.

Just recently, a day after the terror attacks that rocked London a few weeks ago, Richard Angell, a patron in a restaurant that had been evacuated during the jihadist rampage, calmly returned to pay his bill. In explaining his generosity, Angell told a reporter, "These people shouldn't win."

The night before, several bartenders had risked their lives to defend patrons in that particular establishment with bottles, chairs, tables, anything they could find, as the terrorists tried to hack away their customers with large knives. More lives would have been lost were it not for their bravery.

Only a few weeks before that, at a concert attended mostly by young girls, a homeless man, Stephen Jones, who slept most nights near the stadium, helped several victims of that bombing to safety, even pulling nails from the faces of young children.

The resolve and courage in the face of barbaric violence harkens back to the passengers of United Flight 93 who sacrificed their own lives on 9/11 in order to take down a plane headed straight for Washington, D.C., probably for the White House.

While we appropriately recognize those who act with courage, the constant repetition of these scenes appear to be resulting, sadly, in what I call "terror fatigue." We go about the same tired ritual: the requisite shock and horror; the 24-hour media coverage of victims, heroes, and families; and the inevitable autopsy of what went wrong. By this exercise, I am afraid we further enable what Hannah Arendt once famously wrote, "the banality of evil."

Against this backdrop, I think it is important and useful to pull back and contemplate the fundamental error in

our analysis and approach. In the West, we have a blind spot. We want to believe that if we can only understand how a disordered person was raised, how his parents treated him, if he was an orphan or poor or misunderstood or abandoned or a victim of some real or imagined prejudice, then we can understand what makes him kill. Armed with this soft understanding, perhaps we can prevent further tragedy by ameliorating the conditions that we think gave rise to barbaric deeds.

In many discussions of unpredictable and random attacks on bystanders in Europe and America, we find a perverse unwillingness to accurately identify the true motivations of the perpetrators, lest we close the space to "cure them" of their zealotry.

In the current, highly polarized, oversensitized, and extremely volatile climate, it is risky to call a thing for what it is. Instead, again and again, we hear that these were just a few misguided individuals—another mental health problem, another aberration, another police problem; nothing to do with dark theology to notice here. Carry on. We must just accept this as a new normal.

What makes these particular vicious actors different? In a study, the Gallup organization basically finds that most people in the world want similar things. Most people in the world want a good job; to be able to take care of themselves; to be able to take care of their family; to be able to use the creative talents of their personhood, whether it be their intellect or their hands to make things for the benefit of others and, in turn, receive an income that they can support themselves with.

However, as one of my Muslim friends has noted, Petro-Islam has enabled and unleashed a narrow sect of men and women who often want for nothing. Several of the terrorists on 9/11 were young men of both wealth and privilege, with world-class educations. They weren't motivated by the allures of Western secular materialism. They used those values to hide in plain sight. Rather, they were in the grip of a dark, violent theology. They were willing to die for its inherent irrationality.

This cannot continue. Even the Saudis, who have lived for too long with the hyper hypocrisy of buying off Wahhabists while shopping in Paris, recognize this is an unsustainable trend.

Madam Speaker, when I was in college, I remember the day when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was assassinated. It was a hard day for me. Shortly before, I had lived in that country on an exchange program. I received the bountiful gift of hospitality and an invaluable source of deep and reach cultural understanding.

Sadat died. Sadat gave his life because he made a reasoned choice to reach across the divide to find peace. In another courageous move, just a few years ago, in a little-known speech, the current Egyptian President, Abdel

Fattah el-Sisi, said: "Is it possible that 1.6 billion Muslims should want to kill the rest of the world's inhabitants—that is, 7 billion—so that they themselves may live? Impossible."

Quite a courageous statement.

At this moment, Madam Speaker, we are on the verge of wiping out ISIS militarily. But it is only the latest brand. We will only fully resolve the thinking that leads to the embrace of dark theology through a rebirth in reason, modeled through courageous leadership.

As we see in our battle against ISIS, when you call for evil to happen on social media, in Main Street media and in art, eventually someone in the real world takes it to heart. We must stop creating the rhetorical conditions and the media cover for this politically motivated violence or the grotesque twisting of mediums to encourage terror. There is no rationalization that can justify it. This is not about freedom of speech. It is about freedom from violence.

Ask yourself a question: Where would you like to live? Where people lie, steal, and kill? Or where people are good, trustworthy, and free?

Madam Speaker, I will close with this because it is a hint of good news.

Last week, the House of Representatives, in a private session, Democrats and Republicans, had a family meeting and, with due candor, spoke about the effect of escalating rhetoric and the responsibility each of us must take in owning our share of it.

Importantly, the bipartisan Congressional Baseball Game went on as planned last Thursday night. I took my younger staff. The game was energetic and patriotically bipartisan. Madam Speaker, as you are aware, my side lost, but I believe America won.

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

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Madam Speaker, today a lot of people are looking at Washington more perplexed than ever, thinking that nothing is getting done here. It is easy for them to think that because, when they turn on their televisions or listen to their radios and listen to news commentators, all they seem to be talking about is some very obscure idea. But something that dominates all the communication, or a great deal of communication, is that Russia in some way altered the outcome of the last election, perhaps—what they have been telling us—the Russians hacked into the system. This is the image we are being given.

□ 1815

All those emails that came out during the election from the Democratic

National Committee and the Hillary campaign, those emails were, in some way, a product of a Russian conspiracy with the Trump campaign. Over and over and over again, even though all of the experts who we have seen from the intelligence communities on down the line have said that that is bogus; that did not happen; there is no proof that that happened. And many people who are looking into this don't think that the Russians were involved with that hacking at all, much less their involvement in our campaigns in a way that differentiated from every other government in the world, including our own, being involved in trying to impact other people's elections in a light-handed way.

In this situation, the Russian Government has not—again, has not—been proven or even the evidence seems to indicate that they were not involved in a way that actually affected the outcome of our last election. Yet that is all we hear about. That is the massive news coverage, and the American people's attention is being focused on that, or they are being told: Oh, but over in Washington, the Congress is so tied up because of this crisis. We have not been tied up. We have been doing great things here in the Nation's capital, and the Trump administration has been doing great things. We have not been frozen by this unrelenting attack trying to give the American people the idea that the last election was invalid.

This effort to distract us is a disgrace. And I do believe the American people see, when they hear this over and over repeated but there is no substance being told us that indicates the specific crime, the specific hacking incident that happened. No, we have no incidences where any type of Russian interference, in some way, determined the outcome of the last election.

But, of course, the distraction that is taking place is basically covering the fact that we have a group of people who lost the last election who have been disrupting, who have a plan, a program of resistance and disruption of those who did win the election. If there is anything more anti-American than that, I don't know what is. Talk about destroying democracy.

So with that said, what are we doing if we aren't tied up in this Russian problem? And let me note, there has been, even to the point after all the hearings that we had and there is no evidence of it, now some Republicans have gone along with this effort, and we have appointed what was called an independent or a special prosecutor. And now what we can expect is another 3 or 4 months of the headlines on all of the news media except one or two trying to divert our attention. Well, I would ask that the independent counsel and the special prosecutor, they are going to look into Russia, let them not just look into, did our Attorney General have two conversations or three conversations with the Ambassador from Russia to the United States in

passing meetings, I might add, other people engaged, instead of asking questions like that and trying to find some way to charge our Attorney General with some sort of crime that he would have committed and maybe perjury even because he forgot about one conversation with someone over a year's time period where there were thousands of conversations with thousands of people, nobody hope—if they can go into detail like that, let us hope that the Clinton Foundation becomes a target of that investigation.

They want to find out what effect the Russians had on our elections. Let's find out what the millions of dollars that went into the Clinton Foundation did that might have helped Hillary's chances of being elected. Let's find out that. And let's find out how much money was actually put into the Clinton family's pockets when former President Clinton, speaking again before Russian oligarchs, was able to receive certain payments, exorbitant payments, from what I understand, we need to know exactly what they were, into his own pocket at the same time Russian oligarchs were putting millions, maybe tens of millions, into the Clinton Foundation.

So, okay, that needs to be looked at. But I would suggest that the American people need to go beyond this made-up crisis. The American people need to take a look at what we have been accomplishing here, and we have been accomplishing. A healthcare bill passed. And, yes, it is not a perfect healthcare bill, but now we have actually got a bill that is in the system. The Senate is going to have their bill. The system is now working, and there is a healthcare bill going through the system to improve our situation now instead of being stuck with ObamaCare that was so poorly written that people were being priced out of the market of having insurance. And we end up with millions of people who can't afford the health insurance because ObamaCare did what? ObamaCare basically said anybody with a preexisting condition, that risk will be paid for by other health insurance policyholders. And, thus, everybody else's health insurance went way up, and the amount of coverage they got went way down. Surprise. Surprise. No, that was not a good way to go, and the Republicans are trying to find a better method.

Let me just note that I have personally been involved with promoting another concept of how we should be dealing with preexisting conditions, and there is a bill circulating now, and hopefully it will be seriously considered. And as the healthcare bill goes through the House and the Senate, maybe we can get this in there, and that is you look at preexisting conditions and you say: okay, that person has a preexisting condition, and right now that preexisting condition puts them into the mix with all the other policyholders. And then everybody else, including that person, picks up

the cost of insuring for that pre-existing condition, which then prices everybody out. More people end up without insurance, or insurance that they can't cover, or what they are getting for their money is decreased.

My daughter, for example, had leukemia a few years ago. She is 9 years old. And thank God that we got through that and she is now free of leukemia. But I am sure that somewhere along the line what we are going to have is an insurance company saying: Well, you had leukemia, you had a pre-existing condition, thus we are going to charge you more money for health insurance. Maybe 10 years down the road this will happen to her, maybe 20. But the fact is that we don't need to have people around our country that are in that situation. My daughter is now cancer free. And if she has a pre-existing condition, or anybody else in the country has a preexisting condition, what I am proposing—and there is a bill making its way around, people are considering this as an alternative, and I hope they take it seriously, but we will see, at least we are trying, and the idea is the Federal Government will document all preexisting conditions. My daughter's leukemia would be on that list. And at any time from then on that someone with a pre-existing condition has that preexisting condition, if leukemia comes back to her or anyone else who has a pre-existing condition that is documented, it will be paid for by Medicare. Just as simple as that. That condition only. All the rest of her health insurance, however, need not be covered by the Federal Government or anybody else.

Now that the preexisting conditions have not put their amount way up in the cost to buy an insurance, now they will be charged just the same as anybody else who is healthy. But if they break their arm, they are in a car accident, if they have another disease that comes on, they now are insured from that, but they are not having to pay extra insurance because of that pre-existing condition, and you just leave that to Medicare. It is a simple answer. It is not going to cost the taxpayers any more money by doing it any other way. Just let the government take care of those preexisting conditions. All the rest of their healthcare, however, will have to be paid for by that individual. Just the preexisting condition is covered.

So that is a type of reform that we can put into place, and people are talking about these ideas now here. That is why, when the Republican bill passed, it was launching a discussion, an honest discussion, of what we should do. The Senate is going to send us back something, and we will, this year, have a healthcare bill because we will have gone through all of these types of alternatives like the one I just suggested.

We also passed a financial reform bill. It was called the CHOICE Act. It was a financial reform bill that one of

the main parts of it actually repealed the Dodd-Frank bill which was so dramatically hard for our economy and was basically making it very difficult for businesses to function in our country, was a terrible burden, and was actually bringing our economy down. So we passed the elimination of the Dodd-Frank Act, and we have reformed our financial community, and that has passed the House. It is now over to the Senate.

We have passed dozens of notable bills, yet the impression we are given, of course, is the only thing happening here is the Russians were, in some way, engaged in the last election, and we must focus totally on that, even though all the committees that investigated this, all the people who came from the various intelligence agencies, no one said, here is the proof that they were colluding with the Trump campaign to defeat the Democratic candidate in the last election.

So people are only getting that story, but there are all kinds of bills that are being passed, legislation being passed here. Like, for example, there was a weather bill that passed. I mean, this is one example. SUZANNE BONAMICI was someone who had a bill that was attached to the weather bill. It was aimed specifically at trying to have a warning system for tsunami waves that might be created and come not only towards the United States but towards Japan and any other coastal area. That bill passed, and, as I say, it is part of the weather bill now.

And SUZANNE BONAMICI, of course, is a Democrat, and I am a Republican.

The other lie is that Republicans and Democrats can't work together. Well, that is just wrong. People are creating a false image, and I am glad to see, by the elections last night, that the American people aren't falling for the baloney they are being fed.

So was that a good bill, the tsunami bill? I think it was, and it has made it through.

We have other environmentally aimed bills that are making up for the excesses of the last administration that was basically pushing a radical, environmental, globalist approach to environment issues. I think it is a great thing that the President of the United States has withdrawn us from the Paris Agreement, which would have cost us billions of dollars that we would send to other countries and would put us under the jurisdiction of decisions made by international bodies, not by American-elected officials but by international bodies. That was a terrific move on the part of the President.

In fact, Trump has done a number of wonderful things that he is not getting credit for. Because all the media wants to talk about is how many conversations anybody associated with Trump had with any Russians in the last 2 years. Sorry. A lot of other things that are happening are important. Those people who are trying to distract us are

not succeeding. The fact is that President Donald Trump had a triumphant trip overseas. His first visit was to the Middle East.

I am a former speech writer for President Reagan. I didn't write the speech, but I was there when he gave that speech in Berlin telling Gorbachev to "tear down this wall," a speech that made history, not just reflected it but is now seen as a pivotal moment in changing the direction of what was going on with the Cold War.

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I might say, I didn't write it, but I did make sure that I was one of the people who smuggled that speech into the President's hands. After the President was given that speech and said he was going to say that, all of his senior advisers tried to convince him not to say, "tear down this wall." And "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall," was a phrase in history that made history. And Ronald Reagan stood up against all of the people on the left who were attacking him and even all of his own advisers. That made a huge difference in the world that we live in.

Now, let me just note this. We have a President now, President Donald Trump, who went to Saudi Arabia and went to a meeting with the leaders of that part of the world. He talked to them—and these were Muslims, of course. And he said to the Muslim world that, if there is going to be peace with the United States, drive the terrorists out of your mosque; drive the terrorists out of your country.

I haven't been as proud of any President since I was with Ronald Reagan when he said "tear down this wall" than I was proud of our President, President Donald Trump, for telling the Islamic world that they have got to disassociate themselves, they have got to drive the terrorists out of their families and out of their relationships with good and decent Muslims, who are the vast majority of the Muslims in the world.

So, with that said, I think there is a lot going on that is good. There are good things. This is a good report. I hope the American people pay attention.

There are a lot of creative ideas that are going on. These I just told you about, healthcare and finance reform, these are really important things. And the fact that we are not putting everything in the hands of the United Nations or some unelected government to tell us what we have to do in the name of the environment, that is good, too.

Well, I have got a few creative ideas that I have actually presented. I thought I would just let my colleagues know, let my constituents know, and let the rest of the country know, these are some issues on the table that I have personally put on.

I think I have a good chance, for example, of getting into the tax bill a provision that is now written out in H.R. 1792, the Expanding Employee Ownership Act.

What my bill suggests is that we should have more involvement by working people in their own companies. Let them own part of their companies so that the bosses and the laborers work together as a team rather than looking at each other as adversaries.

My bill, H.R. 1792, is being considered for the tax bill that we are putting together. What it says, very simply, is that, if an employer gives to his employees—it has to be a general distribution—stock in that company, the employees don't have to pay income tax on it. And if they keep that stock for 10 years, they don't have to pay capital gains tax.

So what we have now is a major boost of people keeping their good employees, a better working relationship, more productivity, and management more concerned about their laborers because now their laborers own stock in the company—maybe even 10 or 20 percent of the stock at some point. What we have is a bill that has a chance, and it is being considered. That is the type of thing that is going on here.

People are talking about new ideas. For example, I talked about the idea of a new healthcare reform bill and my approach and what I am doing to promote that price for people with pre-existing conditions. That is another example, ideas that are being discussed, legislation that is going through, and people are trying to mold it. That is part of the legislative process.

Also, when you talk about Republicans and Democrats working together, we are being told we don't work together. Well, we do. Republicans and Democrats work together, just like I did on the tsunami bill. We actually have a good relationship—many of us do.

Nowhere is that more evident than in my leadership of H.R. 975, which is a bill that is entitled, Respect State Marijuana Laws. What this bill does is—over the years, in the last 6 years, I have been joined with a Democrat. It is Mr. BLUMENAUER now, and it used to be Congressman Farr when he was with us. We were able to put into the appropriations bill for the Department of Justice a provision, an amendment to the bill that said: No money in this bill can be used by the Department of Justice to supersede the State laws on medical marijuana in those States that have legalized the use of medical marijuana.

So, for the last 5 and 6 years, that has been a totally bipartisan effort. I am a Republican, obviously, and I have been joined by Mr. Farr and, now, Mr. BLUMENAUER. We have actually created a situation where we now have people who are getting involved in researching medical marijuana.

By the way, did you know that Israel now, finally, has stepped forward and has done research in the last 10 years? We haven't. The United States hasn't. In fact, for 100 years, when we should

have been trying to find the medical uses of marijuana, it has been virtually outlawed. And now Israel has found wonderful applications for medical marijuana.

They also, by the way, when they were studying the effects of marijuana, have legalized it for personal use, for adult use of marijuana, as well as medical marijuana.

Well, what does that tell you? That tells you that some of the people who have been telling us, "oh, we can't do this because it is going to have a serious impact," Israel studies this closely, especially when it might have a military implication. This would not destroy their military; otherwise, they would not have passed this major reform in their country.

Now, why is it that marijuana is an important issue and it brings Republicans and Democrats together? We have limited resources here. The idea that we are going to spend billions of dollars not on protecting Americans from terrorists, not from trying to get bad guys—rapists and murderers—in our local area; no, we are going to spend billions of dollars on police, on jailers, on lawyers, on judges, and on prisons. And then we are going to take people out of the workforce. We are spending billions of dollars so somebody will not smoke a weed in their backyard.

And what is even worse, we are telling them we are going to spend billions of dollars to prevent you. If you find that there is a medical use for marijuana, like for senior citizens who have lost their appetites after a major operation—which happened to my mother, by the way. I did not give her marijuana, but I knew when I was feeding her that she had lost her appetite after a major operation. I said to myself: Why can't she have cannabis here? Well, now people know about that.

There is no reason for us to prevent our seniors from having some euphoria when they are 85 years old in a senior citizens home, especially if it brings back their appetite and they feel better because of it rather than drinking. Do they want to have them all drinking?

Well, this is not just for seniors. This is for people who have medical problems. It has been documented to have important uses. And again, no one has ever overdosed with marijuana, ever.

In terms of what we need to do and what we need to focus on are drugs that are harmful. We have an opioid addiction problem now. Doctors have been giving prescriptions for this. We need to confront that and confront other challenges in crime rather than billions of dollars to try to prevent someone from hurting themselves.

If an adult wants to consume cannabis—an adult—it is their business. For the government to intrude, especially the Federal Government, after a State has legalized it, this is tyranny. Our Founding Fathers did not believe that we should have police forces and criminal justice operating at the

State—they believed it should happen at the State and local level, not the Federal level.

These current restrictions that we have, we have people, unfortunately, again, that are living in the past. All they can remember is the sixties when hippies were smoking dope, and it was just literally a counterculture—counter our culture. And I say "our culture" because I have more of a conservative family background.

Although I lived a life in my past and I had too much to drink at times, and maybe even when I was younger, maybe I tried cannabis a couple of times, but I have had an adulthood since I was 23 that I think meets the approval of my parents and, in particular, my dad, who was a lieutenant colonel in the Marines.

So with that said, had I been arrested, let's say, where some of my friends or something were consuming marijuana when I was around, what would have happened to my life? And what is happening to the lives of all of these people, especially in our less affluent areas, who can't afford the legal protections of hiring a lawyer right away?

It is destroying their ability to function in our society. We should not be taking people who are involved in an activity like consuming a weed. Adults should be able to make that decision for themselves. Sending police for someone like that or expending billions of dollars or ruining the life of that young person who can't afford, whether Black, Chicano, or Caucasian, who can't afford a lawyer to get them off and expunge their record, it is going to affect them the rest of their life. We can't be doing that. It is a waste of money.

We have a chance now, with bipartisan support, to pass this amendment again, perhaps. We are trying to get that onto the appropriations bill for the Department of Justice, which would then keep in place those restrictions on the Federal Government.

But I have a bill, again, with bipartisan support, that would make that across the board. It just says that every State that has legalized the use of marijuana, that none of the departments and agencies of the Federal Government should supersede. They should be treated just like someone selling alcohol or whatever. And, in fact, if they do, they will be asking for ID cards from people to make sure that they are not selling to juniors, to people who are minors, rather than to adults, just like beer.

Unfortunately, when it is illegal, it is easier to get marijuana than it is—for someone who is not 18 or 21, it is easier for them to get marijuana than beer because they don't have to show their ID card at the liquor store.

So with that said, there is bipartisan support for my bill. I am hoping that we can get it passed this year or next year, at least in this session of Congress.

And then, finally, we have lots of things going on here. I just discussed several creative things that are being discussed around town. And we have got a President of the United States who is opening the door which was guarded by basically a very far-left-wing philosophy for the last 8 years. The door of government in this country now is open to working people, where this President has committed himself to trade policies and others that are aimed at creating jobs for the American people, ordinary jobs.

One of the things that he has promised us to protect the American people and our American workers is to stop the massive flow of illegals into our country. The massive flow of illegals into our country is bringing down the standard of living of working people.

There is one idea that I have presented. When he wants to build a wall, we have the means to provide the resources to build that wall in a very creative way. It wouldn't cost the American people anything.

So I would hope that those who are listening who like some of these ideas don't get depressed about what they are hearing in the news. Good things are happening in Washington, and a lot of new creative ideas are being discussed.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ADERHOLT (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of a family obligation.

Ms. GABBARD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 1094. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 44 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, June 22, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

OATH OF OFFICE MEMBERS, RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AND DELEGATES

The oath of office required by the sixth article of the Constitution of the United States, and as provided by section 2 of the act of May 13, 1884 (23

Stat. 22), to be administered to Members, Resident Commissioner, and Delegates of the House of Representatives, the text of which is carried in 5 U.S.C. 3331:

“I, AB, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.”

has been subscribed to in person and filed in duplicate with the Clerk of the House of Representatives by the following Member of the 115th Congress, pursuant to the provisions of 2 U.S.C. 25:

GREG GIANFORTE, At-Large District of Montana.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1744. A letter from the Board Chair, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the Board's 103rd Annual Report covering operations for calendar year 2016, pursuant to Sec. 2B of the Federal Reserve Act; to the Committee on Financial Services.

1745. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility, Washington County, IN, et al. [Docket ID: FEMA-2017-0002; Internal Agency Docket No.: FEMA-8483] received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

1746. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, Office of Justice Programs, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Formula Grant Program [Docket No.: OJP (OJJDP) 1737] (RIN: 1121-AA83) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

1747. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Amendment of Section 73.622(i), Post-Transition Table of DTV Allotments, Television Broadcast Stations (Augusta, Georgia) [MB Docket No.: 11-54] (RM-11624) received June 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1748. A letter from the Associate Bureau Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Rural Health Care Support Mechanism [WC Docket No.: 02-60] received June 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1749. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser, Office of Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting reports concerning international agreements other than treaties

entered into by the United States to be transmitted to the Congress within the sixty-day period specified in the Case-Zablocki Act, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); Public Law 92-403, Sec. 1(a) (as amended by Public Law 108-458, Sec. 7121(b)); (118 Stat. 3807); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1750. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's correcting amendments — Wassenaar Arrangement 2015 Plenary Agreements Implementation, Removal of Foreign National Review Requirements, and Information Security Updates; Corrections [Docket No.: 160217120-7396-02] (RIN: 0694-AG85) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1751. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting the Department's Semiannual Report to the Congress from the Office of Inspector General, for the 6-month period of October 1, 2016–March 31, 2017, pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1752. A letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer, Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis, transmitting the Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis 2016 management report and financial statements, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 9106(a)(1); Public Law 97-258 (as amended by Public Law 101-576, Sec. 306(a)) (104 Stat. 2854); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1753. A letter from the Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco, transmitting the 2016 Management Report of the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco including the 2016 Annual Report, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 9106(a)(1); Public Law 97-258 (as amended by Public Law 101-576, Sec. 306(a)) (104 Stat. 2854); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1754. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Policy, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Civil Monetary Penalties Inflation Adjustment for 2017 [Docket No.: OAG 156; AG Order No.: 3823-2017] received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1755. 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-2016-7262; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-079-AD; Amendment 39-18912; AD 2017-11-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1756. 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-2016-8182; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-069-AD; Amendment 39-18906; AD 2017-11-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1757. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0363; Directorate Identifier 2014-NE-08-AD; Amendment 39-

18887; AD 2017-10-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1758. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; ZLIN AIRCRAFT a.s. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0156; Directorate Identifier 2017-CE-003-AD; Amendment 39-18877; AD 2017-10-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1759. 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-2016-6667; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-125-AD; Amendment 39-18882; AD 2017-10-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1760. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Learjet, Inc., Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0501; Directorate Identifier 2017-NM-053-AD; Amendment 39-18908; AD 2017-11-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1761. 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-2016-6666; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-124-AD; Amendment 39-18881; AD 2017-10-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1762. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; British Aerospace Regional Aircraft Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0053; Directorate Identifier 2016-CE-037-AD; Amendment 39-18888; AD 2017-10-14] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1763. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Stemme AG Gliders [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0451; Directorate Identifier 2017-CE-015-AD; Amendment 39-18885; AD 2017-10-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received June 16, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

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. COLE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 396. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2842) to provide

for the conduct of demonstration projects to test the effectiveness of subsidized employment for TANF recipients, and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules. (Rept. 115-187). Referred to the House Calendar.

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 Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California (for herself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. COLE, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. EVANS, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. DEFazio, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. KEATING, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. BARRAGAN, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. LEE, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. MOORE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. TONKO, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. SIRES, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. SOTO, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. ELLISON, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. KING of New York, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 2972. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize grants for training and support services for Alzheimer's patients and their families; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California (for herself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. COLE, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. EVANS, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. DEFazio, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. KEATING, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. BARRAGAN, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. LEE, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. MOORE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. TONKO, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. SIRES, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. SOTO, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. ELLISON, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. PETERSON, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. SUOZZI, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. BLUM, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. KING of New York, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 2973. A bill to provide for the issuance of an Alzheimer's Disease Research Semipostal Stamp; to the Committee on

Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. POCAN (for himself and Ms. KAPTUR):

H.R. 2974. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish an excise tax on certain prescription drugs which have been subject to a price spike, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LIPINSKI (for himself and Mrs. COMSTOCK):

H.R. 2975. A bill to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Homeland Security relating to public transportation security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee):

H.R. 2976. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to allow for the deferment of certain student loans during a period in which a borrower is receiving treatment for cancer; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. GIANFORTE:

H.R. 2977. A bill to reduce a portion of the annual pay of Members of Congress for the failure to adopt a concurrent resolution on the budget which does not provide for a balanced budget, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, and Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. SEWELL of Alabama (for herself, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. CLYBURN, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. HOYER, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BARRAGAN, Ms. BASS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BERA, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. CARDENAS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLAY, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. COSTA, Mr. CRIST, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DEFazio, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. EVANS, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HECK,

Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. KIHUEN, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KILMER, Mr. KIND, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. BEN RAY LUJAN of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE, Mr. MOULTON, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. O'HALLERAN, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PANNETTA, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RASKIN, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. RUSH, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. SCHKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SIRES, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SOTO, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. TITUS, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. VELA, Ms. VELAZQUEZ, Mr. WALZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. WELCH, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. HIMES, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. COOPER, Mr. TONKO, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. CORREA, and Mr. RUIZ):

H.R. 2978. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. AGUILAR:

H.R. 2979. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 390 West 5th Street in San Bernardino, California, as the "Jack H. Brown Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. COLLINS of New York (for himself and Mr. LATTA):

H.R. 2980. A bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to include firearms in the types of property allowable under the alternative provision for exempting property from the estate; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DELANEY (for himself, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 2981. A bill to require all candidates for election for the office of Senator or Member of the House of Representatives to run in an open primary regardless of political party preference or lack thereof, to limit the ensuing general election for such office to the

two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes in such open primary, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, and 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 Ms. HANABUSA (for herself, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. GABBARD, and Mr. ELLISON):

H.R. 2982. A bill to amend title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to restore Medicaid coverage for citizens of the Freely Associated States lawfully residing in the United States under the Compacts of Free Association between the Government of the United States and the Governments of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. KAPTUR (for herself, Mr. HUIZENGA, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. TROTT, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. UPTON, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mrs. DINGELL, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. WALZ, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. MOORE, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. POCAN, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. LATTI, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. AMASH, and Ms. STEFANIK):

H.R. 2983. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, to release an interim report related to aquatic nuisance species control, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2984. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to restrict Members of Congress who represent a State with a waiver approved under the amendments made by the American Health Care Act of 2017 to the same health insurance coverage as is available under such waiver to their constituents; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2985. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to restrict Members of Congress who represent a State with an essential health benefits (EHB) waiver, approved under the amendments made by the American Health Care Act of 2017, to the lowest actuarial value health insurance coverage that is available under the waiver; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 2986. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to restrict Members of Congress who represent a State with a premium age band waiver, approved under the amendments made by the Amer-

ican Health Care Act of 2017, to the highest age band premium for health insurance coverage that is available under the waiver; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. MCSALLY (for herself, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. TIPTON, and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H.R. 2987. A bill to amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to establish the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to place youth and veterans in national service positions to conserve, restore, and enhance the great outdoors of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Agriculture, 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 Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 2988. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to remove the requirement that residents of residential reentry facilities pay 25 percent of any gross income earned during work release to offset the cost of being housed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. NORTON (for herself and Mr. HARRIS):

H.R. 2989. A bill to establish the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. RICHMOND:

H.R. 2990. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to prohibit inclusion of Social Security account numbers on Medicare cards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SMUCKER (for himself, Mr. MEEHAN, and Mr. PERRY):

H.R. 2991. A bill to establish the Susquehanna National Heritage Area in the State of Pennsylvania, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SWALWELL of California (for himself, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. LEE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Mr. CÁRDENAS):

H.R. 2992. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to expand eligibility for public service student loan forgiveness to certain contractor employees of national laboratories; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mrs. WALORSKI:

H.R. 2993. A bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to make available to Congress certain information relating to individuals formerly detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WITTMAN (for himself, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Ms. CHENEY, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Mr. SHUSTER, Ms. HANABUSA, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER):

H.R. 2994. A bill to state the policy of the United States on the minimum number of available battle force ships; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin (for himself, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. MCCARTHY, Mr. HOYER, Mr. ROYCE of California, and Mr. ENGEL):

H. Res. 397. A resolution solemnly reaffirming the commitment of the United States to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's principle of collective defense as enumerated in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. GABBARD (for herself, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, and Ms. JAYAPAL):

H. Res. 398. A resolution expressing support for the designation of June 21 as International Yoga Day; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GROTHMAN (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. BABIN, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana):

H. Res. 399. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that welfare programs discourage marriage and hurt the institution of the family in the United States; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

69. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Oregon, relative to Senate Joint Memorial 7, requesting that the Congress of the United States of America authorize and appropriate adequate funding to the United States Coast Guard to maintain the United States Coast Guard's air facility in Newport, Oregon, in perpetuity; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

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 Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 2972.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution and

Article 1, Section 8, clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California:

H.R. 2973.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. POCAN:

H.R. 2974.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. LIPINSKI:

H.R. 2975.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Const. art. I, §8, cl. 18.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN:

H.R. 2976.

- H.R. 1928: Mr. BOST.
H.R. 1939: Mr. DUNN.
H.R. 1955: Ms. PINGREE and Mr. COLLINS of New York.
H.R. 1969: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 1995: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.
H.R. 2012: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 2013: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 2023: Mr. LONG.
H.R. 2092: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 2105: Mr. TROTT.
H.R. 2106: Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, and Mr. MEEKS.
H.R. 2142: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2150: Ms. GABBARD, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, and Mr. FOSTER.
H.R. 2172: Mr. BUDD.
H.R. 2180: Mr. POCAN, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 2205: Mr. BOST.
H.R. 2215: Mr. MCNERNEY.
H.R. 2226: Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 2240: Mr. SCHNEIDER.
H.R. 2258: Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 2259: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2301: Mr. MCNERNEY.
H.R. 2315: Mr. CUMMINGS and Mr. SCHRAEDER.
H.R. 2366: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 2408: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Ms. ROSLEHTINEN.
H.R. 2418: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 2422: Mr. WALZ, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, and Mr. PERLMUTTER.
H.R. 2434: Mr. BACON.
H.R. 2435: Mr. SERRANO.
H.R. 2451: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2465: Mr. HARPER, Mr. KIND, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. EVANS, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Mr. HIGGINS of New York.
H.R. 2472: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. EVANS, and Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 2476: Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 2478: Mr. ALLEN.
H.R. 2526: Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 2556: Mr. CARTER of Georgia.
- H.R. 2610: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 2611: Mr. WESTERMAN and Mr. CRAWFORD.
H.R. 2616: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 2625: Mr. SARBANES, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. YARMUTH.
H.R. 2641: Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. LANCE, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, and Mr. AGUILAR.
H.R. 2651: Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. BONAMICI, and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2662: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico and Mrs. RADEWAGEN.
H.R. 2690: Ms. MOORE, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, and Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 2713: Mr. SHUSTER and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.
H.R. 2723: Mr. OLSON, Mrs. BLACK, and Mr. DESJARLAIS.
H.R. 2740: Mr. ENGEL.
H.R. 2754: Mr. UPTON.
H.R. 2756: Mr. DEUTCH.
H.R. 2781: Mr. BOST.
H.R. 2805: Mr. ROYCE of California.
H.R. 2822: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 2825: Mr. GARRETT.
H.R. 2840: Mr. HECK and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 2853: Mr. WALZ, Mr. DUFFY, and Mr. FASO.
H.R. 2854: Mr. CICILLINE and Mr. MCNERNEY.
H.R. 2856: Ms. MENG, Mr. DUNN, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. FLORES, Mr. OLSON, Mr. VELA, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. MACARTHUR, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mrs. WALORSKI, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. FASO, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, and Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 2862: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. GALLAGHER, Ms. GRANGER, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H.R. 2870: Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia.
H.R. 2871: Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. LOBIONDO.
H.R. 2879: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.
H.R. 2889: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 2901: Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Ms. NOR-TON, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. RASKIN, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 2908: Mr. HECK, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Ms. BORDALLO.
- H.R. 2909: Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. LABRADOR.
H.R. 2913: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. MOORE, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 2918: Mr. ROKITA and Mr. HARRIS.
H.R. 2919: Mr. POLIS and Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 2929: Mr. BEYER.
H.R. 2936: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2937: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.
H.R. 2942: Ms. FUDGE, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mrs. LAWRENCE, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 2943: Mr. KINZINGER.
H.R. 2956: Mr. HARRIS and Mr. LATTA.
H.J. Res. 2: Mr. GIANFORTE.
H.J. Res. 6: Mr. GIANFORTE.
H.J. Res. 31: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. POCAN, Mr. DESAULNIER, and Mr. MCEACHIN.
H.J. Res. 48: Mr. PERLMUTTER.
H.J. Res. 102: Ms. MOORE.
H. Con. Res. 8: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.
H. Con. Res. 57: Mr. POE of Texas.
H. Con. Res. 59: Mr. ROYCE of California and Mr. VALADAO.
H. Res. 31: Mr. VALADAO, Mr. MOULTON, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H. Res. 43: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina and Mr. BRAT.
H. Res. 185: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H. Res. 220: Mr. LANGEVIN.
H. Res. 257: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY.
H. Res. 271: Mr. ROUZER.
H. Res. 285: Mr. EVANS.
H. Res. 304: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H. Res. 318: Mr. PAULSEN.
H. Res. 332: Mr. LYNCH.
H. Res. 359: Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. POLIQUIN.
H. Res. 363: Mr. RASKIN, Mr. PALLONE, and Ms. MOORE.
H. Res. 371: Mrs. DINGELL.
H. Res. 395: Mr. ELLISON.



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Vol. 163

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2017

No. 106

Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable JONI ERNST, a Senator from the State of Iowa.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, the center of our joy, You are our strength. Thank You for Your guidance and protection.

Lord, be a stronghold for our lawmakers, providing them with strength for today and hope for tomorrow. May they cast their cares on You, knowing that no one is more concerned about the things that threaten their peace. Show Yourself faithful to the faithful, rewarding integrity with Your bountiful blessings.

Lord, arm our Senators with courage for life's battles, keeping them humble and faithful in their work. Help us all to do the best we can each day and leave the results to You.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 21, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JONI ERNST, a Senator from the State of Iowa, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. ERNST thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, in the many years since ObamaCare was imposed on the American people, it has continued to hurt the people we represent over and over and over again with higher costs, fewer choices, pain and heartbreak for the middle class. We have watched ObamaCare unravel before our very eyes with each passing year. Now it teeters on the edge of collapse, and we face a choice: Allow the unsustainable ObamaCare status quo to continue hurting more Americans or take action to finally move forward.

Early on, Democrats made it clear they did not want to work with us toward that goal in a serious or bipartisan way. I regret that. But we have a responsibility to move forward, and we are.

As I have said, our entire conference has been active and engaged in moving beyond the failures of ObamaCare for quite some time now, and we are focused on the following: stabilizing insurance markets, which are collapsing under ObamaCare; improving the affordability of health insurance, which keeps getting more expensive under ObamaCare; freeing Americans from ObamaCare mandates, which force them to buy insurance they don't want; strengthening Medicaid for those who need it the most; and preserving access to care for patients with preexisting conditions. Those are the principles.

We believe we can do better than the ObamaCare status quo, and we fully intend to do so. We have all received the calls, letters, and emails from our constituents who have been hurt by this failed healthcare law. We all know the pain it has caused in our home States.

Take my home State of Kentucky, for example. Under ObamaCare, insurance markets are collapsing in Kentucky, just as we see them collapsing across the country. We want to stabilize them. Kentucky was once held up as an ObamaCare success story, but ObamaCare made a mess of healthcare markets in my home State, just as it has made a mess of markets all across the Nation. Too many families in Kentucky who liked their insurance plans or their doctors soon found they were unable to keep them. When families are kicked off their plan, they must find a new insurer, often at a higher price. When families must change doctors, they often lose a bond of trust they develop with a physician who is familiar with their medical history. When insurers flee the exchanges, it leaves families with fewer options for their healthcare. In fact, Kentuckians in nearly half of our counties now have only one option on the ObamaCare exchanges, and as we all know, one option really isn't an option at all.

A woman from Lexington contacted my office about her difficulty finding a plan on the exchanges. Here is what she had to say: "I live in one of the three largest cities in our state, and I had two options for insurance this year." She wrote that the limited networks on both of those two plans "[eliminated] a huge number of providers in Fayette County," the second largest county in my State. In addition to the limited access to care on these plans, she said, "The lowest deductible option was \$10,000."

The lowest deductible option—\$10,000. For this Kentuckian and for so many others, ObamaCare has failed. We must do better, better for Kentuckians and

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



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better for families all across the country. That is why we have to act.

Under ObamaCare, healthcare costs are skyrocketing in Kentucky, just as they are skyrocketing across the country. We want to improve affordability. Too many Kentuckians have learned firsthand that the so-called Affordable Care Act has really been anything but affordable. Premiums and deductibles continue to climb higher as ObamaCare takes a larger bite out of Kentuckians' budgets.

A recent Health and Human Services report shows that ObamaCare premiums in Kentucky have spiked an average of 75 percent since 2013, when the law was fully implemented. This year alone, ObamaCare premiums have shot up by as much as 47 percent.

After years of being frustrated by ObamaCare, a small business owner from Lancaster, KY, said she had "decided it was utter nonsense to buy insurance that covered nothing." She said that it was utter nonsense to buy insurance that covered nothing.

Although she pays a large sum every month, her plan "covers no office visits, no prescription coverage, [and] has a \$6,000 deductible." In her estimate, "[i]t is useless."

The rising costs of ObamaCare add a burden that many in my State simply cannot bear. I have received heart-breaking letters from Kentuckians, such as one family faced with this dilemma: Pay for health insurance or put food on the table. As ObamaCare collapses, these families are stuck dealing with the consequences. Increasing costs have become the status quo under ObamaCare, and it is completely unsustainable—unsustainable for Kentuckians and unsustainable for families across the country. That is why we have to act.

Under ObamaCare, Kentuckians are being forced to buy insurance plans they don't want, just as Americans are being similarly forced to do so all across our country. We want to free them from those mandates. The American people have made clear that they don't like the mandate, which compels individuals to purchase unaffordable ObamaCare plans or pay a penalty. When you combine those who pay the fine and those who received a waiver, it adds up to millions of Americans who decided they didn't want or simply could not afford ObamaCare.

Listen to the story of a single mom from Berea, KY, who recently wrote my office. She is a full-time student trying to make ends meet. When she began searching for a plan on the ObamaCare exchanges, she saw a startling picture: high premiums and a staggering deductible. She wrote:

At this rate, I would honestly be better not to take health insurance at all and hope for the best.

Americans like myself need something better.

Some families, instead of bracing for another double-digit increase next year, are considering not buying health

insurance at all. Because of the ObamaCare mandate, they are forced to buy insurance they just can't afford.

The elimination of the mandate will restore to Americans the freedom to choose the healthcare plans that are right for them, instead of being forced to purchase something that may not meet their needs. The American people, just like this Kentucky mom, deserve a better healthcare system than ObamaCare.

The Senate Republican conference is focused on addressing the issues I mentioned as we work toward strengthening Medicaid and preserving access to care for patients with preexisting conditions.

The Kentuckians' stories I have read this morning are just a sample of the pain felt by so many across my State, just as Americans from States across the country continue to share similar concerns with their Senators. ObamaCare's years-long legacy of soaring prices, shrinking choices, and total failure will continue to get worse unless we act.

The ObamaCare status quo is simply unsustainable. It is hurting Americans, and it will continue to do so unless we act. The American people are demanding relief, and we intend to deliver it to them. That is why Senate Republicans are continuing to work toward smarter healthcare solutions that will finally allow us to move beyond this failed law.

I want to repeat what I said yesterday. A discussion draft will be made public tomorrow. Every Member of the Senate will have it, and it will be posted online for everyone to review.

For the past 7 years, ObamaCare has continued to hurt the people we represent. For the past 7 years, Republicans have offered ideas for a better way forward. Soon we will finally have the chance to turn the page on this failing law.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all time postcloture on the Mandelker nomination be considered expired at 4:15 p.m. today; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Billingslea nomination, it be as if cloture had been invoked at 6:30 p.m. tonight.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, we are only a little more than a week away from having to vote on a secret Republican healthcare bill, according to the timelines given by the majority leader to the press—just 1 week away from voting on legislation that will reorder one-sixth of our economy and impact every single American in this country, and not a soul in America has seen it.

I have never seen a more radical or reckless legislative process in my time in politics—write the bill in secret; discuss it in secret; send it to the CBO in secret; then rush it to the floor with no committee hearings, no amendments, and just 10 hours of debate for the minority.

That is not how America ever got big things done. That is not how we do big things like healthcare in the Senate. That is hardly how we do small things, and my Republican friends know it.

Republican Senator BILL CASSIDY, of Louisiana, said: "I've always said I would have preferred a more open process."

Republican Senator MURKOWSKI, from Alaska, said: "If I'm not going to see a bill before we have a vote on it, that's just not a good way to handle something that is as significant and important as health care."

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Republican Senator MORAN said: "My hope is that we treat the bill seriously, that we have hearings, that we have witnesses. I want regular order to work."

In addition, Republican Senators RUBIO, CORKER, GARDNER, MCCAIN, COLLINS, PAUL, DAINES, FISCHER, JOHNSON, and LEE have all complained about the lack of transparency in the process.

Why did they flatly refuse to say to the majority leader: Let's have a hearing. Let's accept amendments in committee. Let's have regular order and real debate on this bill. It is too important.

If they do not want to say it to the majority leader directly, I hope they express their frustration with this process with their votes on the motion to proceed, which looks like we will have next week.

We Democrats had all of the things they had asked for. They did not vote for our bill, those who were here, but at least they had input. They could offer amendments on the floor or in the committees, if they were in the relevant committees. They could debate.

Not today. Not next week.

Now, why is it that my Republican friends have resorted to such secrecy?

There is only one reason: They are ashamed of their bill. They must think

they are better off not talking about the bill publicly. We all know, if my Republican friends believed it was a good healthcare bill, one that actually lowered costs and improved care and helped more Americans afford insurance, they would be preaching it from the mountaintops. There would be a brass band down every Main Street in America that would be announcing this new legislation—but no. They are afraid to even whisper about their bill. They want it out in the open for as little time as possible in order for it to receive as little scrutiny as possible. They do not want the American people to see that their healthcare bill is little more than a vehicle to give another tax break to the wealthy, made possible by cutting care and raising costs on middle-class Americans and those who are struggling to get to the middle class.

They do not want the American people to know their healthcare bill is mean, like President Trump said it was, because they do not think it could survive an open process so they are keeping it secret and leaving almost no time for its review. If a bill cannot survive scrutiny or public debate, if a bill cannot survive a committee process or the threat of a single, open hearing, it should never become law—plain and simple.

Now, for months, we Democrats have tried to reach out to Republicans to bring an end to this dangerous game and move toward a bipartisan process. We want to improve our Nation's healthcare system. If Republicans were serious about wanting to improve our healthcare system, too, they would get the President to guarantee the cost-sharing payments, stop sabotaging our healthcare system, and come talk with Democrats about bipartisan solutions. Instead, they are just sabotaging the bill.

As for the insurance companies which are pulling out of some exchanges and raising premiums, ask them; the No. 1 reason: no permanent cost sharing. Who is standing in the way of permanent cost sharing? The President and our Republican colleagues. They are the reason people are pulling out of exchanges and premiums are going up. They cannot escape that.

We Democrats were willing to try to work with our colleagues. We asked to have a bipartisan meeting in the Old Senate Chamber so we could discuss this—just the 100 Senators—among one another. We were rejected on that. We have been rebuffed overall, but the invitation and sentiment remains. I would remind my Republican colleagues that time is getting short for them to change their minds.

RUSSIA SANCTIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now, on another matter, Russia sanctions.

Just last week, the Senate approved a package of Russia sanctions that

would lock in existing sanctions, give Congress the ability to review any sanctions relief, and implement tough, new sanctions to punish Mr. Putin and his allies for meddling in our election.

The importance of this legislation is reflected in the overwhelming bipartisan vote of 98 to 2. Now we are hearing that the House of Representatives is under pressure from the White House, and they might blue-slip the bill, which could delay or prevent it from passing.

Never mind the fact that the Senate bill was written to avoid such a problem, as my friend, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CORKER, said when he heard the news. Never mind that, and make no mistake about it, the blue-slip threat is nothing more than a procedural excuse by House Republicans who dredged it up to cover for a President who has been far too soft on Russia. This administration has been far too eager to put sanctions relief on the table. That is what this is about.

Many people, from one end of America to the other, are asking: Why? Why is he afraid of tough sanctions on Russia?

Just yesterday, the White House spokesperson said that he had never spoken to the President about Russia's interference in our election. What has Russia concluded from all of this? Putin now knows he will not suffer any consequences for disinformation campaigns, for buzzing our ships and planes, for threatening our European allies, for cyber hacks, energy coercion, or his ongoing support for Russian separatists in Ukraine.

Now, in a short time, the Trump administration is sending one of our most senior diplomats to Russia to meet with his Russian counterpart.

Is the White House encouraging House Republicans to delay this bill so they can offer the Russians something in their upcoming talks? We do not know. It sure seems possible, even likely, and it is a flatout wrong approach, as Democrats and Republicans in this Chamber agree.

The United States should not be afraid to engage with Russia, but we cannot look the other way or, worse yet, reward Putin after he directed an assault on our democratic institutions. That is why the Senate passed this package of sanctions, sending a powerful message to President Trump that he should not lift sanctions on Russia.

Responding to Russia's assault on our democracy should be a bipartisan issue that unites both Democrats and Republicans in the House and in the Senate. The House Republicans need to pass this bill as quickly as possible. Their blue-slip excuse does not hold water.

CHINA AND NORTH KOREA

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, a word on China and North Korea.

Yesterday, the President tweeted: "While I greatly appreciate the efforts of President Xi and China to help with North Korea, it has not worked out. At least I know China tried!"

We will wait to see if this tweet actually signals a shift in U.S. policy—you never know with these tweets—but no doubt it is a confession that the President's conciliatory approach toward China has failed.

Just months after he was elected, President Trump said he was willing to offer a better trade deal if China worked with us on North Korea—going back on years of campaign rhetoric about getting tough on trade with China, which is something I have fully supported and opposed, frankly, both President Bush and President Obama for being too weak on trade with China. When I heard that President Trump, during the campaign, was going to be tough on China, I was glad. I thought this was an area in which we could work together.

Yet the minute he sits down with Xi, Xi sort of wins him over, and he says: Well, we will get something out of North Korea.

I told the President on the telephone that China will not back off and help us with North Korea unless they feel the sting of economic sanctions for their illicit, unfair trade practices which have robbed millions of American jobs.

The idea that China would suddenly start to cooperate with the United States after President Trump dropped his threats to get tough on China was always unrealistic and misguided. China has been unwilling to cooperate with the United States in the economic or foreign policy spheres for decades. China puts itself first. That is what it is doing now.

Let's not forget that millions of American workers have been hurt by China's rapacious trading practices over the decades. Selling out those American workers and simply hoping that China, out of its good graces, would start working with us on North Korea never made sense.

The best approach to dealing with China is to be clear and consistent and tough about America's foreign policy and economic interests. President Trump, rather than going soft on trade with China, should get tough on trade with China. That is the best way to get China to work with us on North Korea, and it is the right thing to do for the American worker.

I have some hope that President Trump's tweet yesterday means he has come to this realization and will work with us to get tough on China on trade.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Mandelker nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic whip.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it was about a month ago that the House of Representatives, by a narrow vote, voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to replace it with their own creation. That effort by the House of Representatives passed by, I believe, 2, 3, or 4 votes. It was very close, and it was a partisan rollcall—all Republicans voting for it and no Democrats voting for it. So it came to the floor of the House without any bipartisan preparation. It was only after the vote that the Congressional Budget Office took a look at the measure and reported to the American people its impact.

Now, that is unusual because, when you take a big issue like the reform of America's healthcare system, historically, traditionally, Members of the Congress—the House and Senate—will send their versions of the bill to the Congressional Budget Office and ask for an analysis: Tell us how much this will cost. Tell us the impact on the deficit. Tell us what it will do in terms of healthcare coverage. But the House Republicans chose to vote before the analysis.

Well, the analysis still came out, and when it came out, the report was unsettling because it had a dramatic negative impact on healthcare in America. The House Republican repeal, according to the Congressional Budget Office, would mean that 23 million Americans would lose their health insurance.

Remember, we started this debate 6 or 7 years ago because we were concerned that too few Americans had health insurance and we wanted to expand the reach of health insurance and make sure that it was good health insurance, and that is why we passed the Affordable Care Act. We fell short in some respects, but we certainly achieved our goal of increasing the number of insured Americans with the Affordable Care Act. In my home State of Illinois, the percentage of those uninsured with health insurance was cut in half. In fact, it was even better than that. So more and more people ended

up with coverage through Medicaid, as well as through private health insurance.

Now comes the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, and the Republicans in the House decide to not only erase all of that progress in providing more health insurance for more families but to make it worse—to make the number of the uninsured even higher than it was. So if that is the starting point of healthcare reform, you ask yourself: Is that really a worthy goal? Why would you do that?

Well, they were forced to do it. They really were. The House Republicans really, in fairness to them, had no choice, because they made the initial decision that their highest priority was to give a tax break of about \$700 billion to the wealthiest people in America. So by creating this tax break—giving this money back to wealthy people—they took that same amount of money out of America's healthcare system. When you take \$700 billion out of America's healthcare system, here is what happens. People who are currently receiving their health insurance through Medicaid, a government program, will have fewer and fewer opportunities to take advantage of Medicaid. In fact, they acknowledged that. The Republicans said in the House: We are just cutting back on Medicaid.

Secondly, you reduce or eliminate the helping hand we give to working families who can't afford to pay their hospitalization premiums. If you are in certain categories, we give you a subsidy to pay for your premiums. So follow the logic: If you cut the taxes by \$700 billion and take \$700 billion out of the healthcare system, you have less money to provide Medicaid health insurance for those in low-income categories, and you have less money to help working families pay for their health insurance premiums.

The Congressional Budget Office looked at that and said that the net result at the end of the day is that 23 million Americans will lose their health insurance because of this decision by the Republican House. In the State of Illinois, a State of about 12.5 million people, 1 million people would lose their health insurance because of this action taken by the Republican House of Representatives.

Well, from basic civics we know that here we are in the Senate and we get our chance once the House has acted. So we have been waiting—waiting for almost a month for the process to begin. The sad reality is it never even started—not the ordinary, open, public, transparent process of debating a change in America's public health system.

Instead, Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, said: What I am going to do is to take 13 of my male Republican Senators, put them in a room, and let them write an alternative to the House bill. Why he didn't initially include the women in his caucus, he can explain, but it was 13 of the male

Republicans who would sit in a room to write, in secret, their alternative.

We think: Well, most legislative ideas start with that kind of a meeting—a closed-door meeting in the quiet of a room, basic negotiation. But it is the nature of a democracy and our form of government that at some point this becomes public. Shouldn't it? If we are going to change the laws about health insurance—basic fundamental coverage for American families—shouldn't we know it? Shouldn't we know what the changes will be before we vote on them?

Well, there is a pretty rampant rumor that tomorrow, for the first time, there will be a limited disclosure of this Republican effort over the last several weeks. We are told—and it is only a rumor—that the Senate Republican leadership will sit down with the Senate Republican caucus and show them for the first time what they want to propose that we vote on.

One might say: Well, that sounds like the beginning of a good, long process.

It is not. It is the beginning of a short process, because the Republican leader has said that this time next week we will be into debating that issue and voting on it to its conclusion—in 10 days. That is 10 days, start to finish, to rewrite the healthcare system of America, 10 days on a measure that has not been disclosed to the Republican Senators—not all of them—let alone the Democratic Senators and let alone the American people. That is what we are faced with.

When we wrote the Affordable Care Act, which was widely criticized by the Republicans, let me tell you the process we followed with the Affordable Care Act. In 2009, the Senate HELP Committee—or the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee—held 13 public, bipartisan hearings, 20 walk-throughs of various proposals, and a markup in the committee that went on for 1 calendar month, and 160 amendments offered by the Republicans were adopted. That was in 2009 with the Affordable Care Act.

The Senate Finance Committee, which writes the tax laws, held 17 roundtables, summits, and hearings on the legislation, 13 Member meetings and walk-throughs, and 38 meetings and negotiations.

Keep in mind that we still haven't seen the Republican proposal we are supposed to vote on next week—this secret proposal.

The Senate Finance Committee on the Affordable Care Act held a 7-day markup and adopted 11 Republican amendments. At the end of the day, not a single Republican Senator voted for the measure, but they offered amendments, and those amendments were debated and many of them were adopted by the Democratic majority.

When the Affordable Care Act came to the floor of the Senate, we spent—and I remember this well—25 consecutive days in session considering that bill—25 days. As to what Senator

MCCONNELL and the Republicans will offer to us in what we call reconciliation, we will be lucky to get 25 hours. We spent 25 days on the Affordable Care Act. In total, the Senate spent more than 160 hours on the Affordable Care Act and more than 150 Republican amendments were adopted, though not a single Republican Senator ended up voting for the bill. We opened it to their amendments and adopted their amendments. It was a bipartisan effort.

What has been the process this time around? No hearings, no markups, no public input, no support from the medical advocacy community at all. I don't have a single medical advocacy group in Illinois that supports what the Republicans did in the House of Representatives—not one. Hospitals, doctors, nurses, pediatricians, and disease advocacy groups, like cancer and heart, are all opposed to what was done in the House of Representatives, and we are being told, when it comes to the Senate's turn: Get ready, it is going to be fast. Don't blink, you might miss it.

Let me tell my colleagues what else we have. We have a record of quotations from leaders on the Republican side who, even though the Affordable Care Act went through all of these hearings and all this deliberation, were very explicit in their criticism. Here is Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL, a Republican of Kentucky, in December of 2009, on the Affordable Care Act. He said: "This massive piece of legislation that seeks to restructure one-sixth of our economy is being written behind closed doors, without input from anyone, in an effort to jam it past not only the Senate but the American people."

I might say to Senator MCCONNELL: How would you explain what you are doing now when it comes to rewriting the healthcare system behind closed doors without input from anyone? Is it an effort to "jam it past not only the Senate but the American people"?

Senator MARCO RUBIO last week was quoted as saying: "The Senate is not a place where you can just cook up something behind closed doors and rush it for a vote on the floor."

I agree with Senator RUBIO, but that is what they are trying to do.

Senator LISA MURKOWSKI, a Republican of Alaska, said: "If we had utilized the process that goes through a committee, I would be able to answer not only your questions but my constituents' questions."

Senator MURKOWSKI, a Republican of Alaska, expressed what most of us feel. How could we even answer an honest, legitimate question from someone we represent when we can't even see the measure that is being produced by the Republicans.

Senator JERRY MORAN, a Republican from Kansas, said last month:

I want the committees of jurisdiction to hold hearings, bring the experts who know about healthcare from across the country, bring the constituents to tell us their stories. Then I want every Senator, all 100 of us, to have the chance to offer amendments.

Thank you, Senator MORAN. I agree with you. That is how the Senate is supposed to work, but that is not how it is working now.

Let me tell my colleagues what some of the groups have said about this Republican effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act. You expect: Oh, it is a partisan comment from a partisan Senator. These are nonpartisan groups.

The American Heart Association, what do they say? They say: "The House bill would seriously erode pre-existing condition protections, including for patients suffering from cardiovascular disease."

About a third of us on Earth—or at least a third of us in America—have some preexisting condition. For the longest time, insurance companies said: If you are a woman, it is a pre-existing condition.

Go figure. But now, at least a third of us have some condition which, in the old days, would disqualify us from insurance coverage or make it too expensive.

So now we put in the Affordable Care Act a prohibition against discriminating against any American because they have a preexisting medical condition. I think that is pretty important. My family has certainly had the same experience as other families when it comes to preexisting conditions.

Now the Republicans have said: We are going to take that out. We want to give you more choice. We want the insurance companies to give you more choice. Choice means another reason to say no. Choice means coverage that isn't there when you need it. Choice means restrictions on your health insurance policy. That may not bother you at all today, but tomorrow, when you go to that doctor for that diagnosis you will never forget as long as you live or get involved in an accident and finally take a close look at that health insurance policy, you want to make sure it is there if you need it, don't you?

The Republicans say we need more choice. The American Heart Association says that, when it comes to pre-existing conditions, the House Republican repeal bill would seriously erode protection of Americans.

The American Medical Association, the largest group of physicians in America, said: "We cannot support [the bill] that passed the House as drafted because of the expected decline in health insurance coverage and the potential harm it would cause to vulnerable patient populations."

The American Diabetes Association said: "It would give insurers the ability to charge people with pre-existing conditions—such as diabetes—higher prices [for health insurance] . . . and would allow insurers to deny people with diabetes the care and services they need to treat their disease."

The American Association of Retired Persons has weighed in. Here is what they say: "This bill would weaken Medicare's fiscal sustainability, dra-

matically increase health care costs for Americans aged 50–64, and put at risk the health care of millions of children and adults with disabilities, and poor seniors who depend on the Medicaid program for long-term services and supports."

AARP is working overtime to notify Americans over the age of 50 and their kids that the repeal of the Affordable Care Act that passed the House of Representatives is a bad deal for seniors and their families.

There is something else going on, too. For more than 6 years, Republicans in Congress have been shouting "repeal and replace" from the rooftops, and they voted more than 60 times to repeal the Affordable Care Act. They never liked it from the start. They put language into bills to make it more difficult for the Affordable Care Act to work, such as funding needed to make individual insurance markets work as intended. Then, on his first day in office, President Trump signed an Executive order directing Federal agencies not to enforce the Affordable Care Act.

The Trump administration cut the open enrollment timeframe in half, making it harder for people to sign up for insurance—meaning fewer people covered, fewer people in the insurance pools, and premiums going up as a result. The President, to this day, continues to make uncertainty in the insurance market. He refuses to say whether he will continue providing cost-sharing reduction payments to help 7 million Americans afford health insurance. Without the payments, insurers tell us premiums will skyrocket 20 percent next year.

Let me mention one other thing that has happened as part of this health insurance debate. We decided to make a historic change in healthcare in America. I have told the story repeatedly, and I will not tell it in detail, but it was Paul Wellstone, a progressive from Minnesota, who sat right there, and Pete Domenici, a conservative from New Mexico, who sat right there, who came together—these two unlikely partners—because they each had members of their families who suffered from mental illness. They said: Why is it that we don't treat mental illness like an illness? Why is it that health insurance just covers physical illness?

They were right. They fought the insurance companies for years, and they won. We put it in the Affordable Care Act. We said: If you offer health insurance, you have to cover mental illness. My friends, it is time for us to step out of the shadows, where mental illness was considered a curse and not an illness, and deal with it as something that can be successfully treated. We put it in the bill, and most Americans would agree that it was the right thing to do.

There was another part of it, though, that slipped my attention and now I know it is critically important. It wasn't just mental illness. It was coverage for mental illness and substance abuse treatment.

How important is substance abuse treatment in America today? Go to Maine, go to Iowa, go to Illinois, and ask the question: Are there any problems with opioids? Heroin? Overdosing? Death? Of course.

When you go to the rehab and addiction treatment centers and you ask people: How is your family paying for this care to try to rescue this young child in your family or someone dealing with addiction, they say they are either under Medicaid, the government insurance program, or their health insurance policy covers substance abuse treatment. Why? Because Wellstone and Domenici effectively included that in the bill. Now, under the bill that passed in the House of Representatives, an estimated 1.3 million Americans with mental disorders and 2.8 million seeking help with substance abuse will lose their coverage for treatment. It is no longer a priority under the Republican idea of giving you choice with your health insurance.

Choice—when you are a father buying health insurance for your family and you are picking out a health insurance policy and you have a choice, could you anticipate the teenage daughter you love with all your heart will one day face an addiction and desperately need substance abuse treatment to save her life? Did you think about that when you signed up for the right choice in a lower cost health insurance plan?

I feel, and many feel, that this is essential when it comes to services and health insurance. Republicans say: No, it is an option; take it or leave it. People who leave it and then need it find themselves in a terrible predicament. They can't provide the lifesaving treatment their kids and other members of the family they love desperately need.

I see my colleague on the floor, and I will not go any further other than to say this: Why are we in this position when, 10 days before the final vote on changing healthcare for 360 million Americans, it is in a proposal that no one has seen and no one has read and no one has analyzed? It is an embarrassment to this great institution, the Senate, that we are not deliberating on this measure—this lifesaving, life-and-death measure—with the kind of respect that it deserves, with the kind of expertise that it deserves.

My Republican Senate colleagues have said it well—Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator MORAN, and others: The Senate ought to do what the Senate was elected to do. Take up an important measure like this, read it carefully, debate it, amend it, bring in the experts, and don't move so quickly on it that you could jeopardize the healthcare of millions of Americans. I am sorry it has reached that point.

If 3 Republican Senators out of 52—if three of them—will step up and say: This is wrong; we need to do this the right way, a transparent way, a fair way, a bipartisan way. If three will step up and do that, then we can roll up

our sleeves and do the right thing for America.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Just a moment, Madam President. I am looking for the healthcare bill. I know it is here somewhere. I haven't been able to find it and have been looking all morning. I suspect maybe we will find it in the next couple of days.

I wish to talk about Medicaid. Medicaid is often perceived as a welfare program, and it isn't. It is essential medical support.

Now, let's talk about who receives Medicaid. Seventy-two percent of the people who receive assistance from Medicaid are children, people with disabilities, and the elderly. Indeed, 85 percent of the expenditures for Medicaid, as opposed to enrollees—85 percent of the expenditures—are for those same groups—the children, the disabled, and the elderly.

Particularly, what a lot of people don't realize is that Medicaid is one support—if not the principal support—for nursing home care throughout the country, and especially in my State of Maine. I suspect, if we surveyed people—perhaps some even in this body, but certainly in the general public: How are you going to cover Aunt Minnie's nursing home care when she has to have it later in her life, most people would say: Oh, we have Medicare. People I talk to at home say: Medicare is going to take care of me. No, except in very rare and limited circumstances, Medicare does not cover nursing home care. It doesn't cover long-term care. That is Medicaid.

Sixty-eight percent of all the Medicaid spending in Maine was for elderly or disabled people in 2014. About one in three people nationwide is going to require nursing home care—one in three. Nationally, over three-quarters of nursing home residents are covered by Medicaid. So if we are talking in this bill, wherever it is—if anybody finds it, let me know—about significant cuts to Medicaid, we are talking about people's ability to have long-term care in nursing homes. Make no mistake about it. You cannot cut Medicaid by over \$1 trillion in 10 years and not have it affect those people.

Now, some say we are giving the States flexibility. We are giving the States flexibility to make agonizing decisions between disabled people, children, and seniors. That is not flexibility. To quote the President, that is "mean." That is cruel. The States are only going to have two choices. They are either going to have to cut people off and limit services—and remember that three-quarters of the people are disabled, elderly, and children—or they are going to have to raise taxes on their own citizens.

Now, we are claiming we are going to help the Federal budget. We are going to reduce the deficit by \$800 billion over 10 years by passing this bill. But

we are just shifting the bill to the States. That is nice work, if you can get it. Why don't we shift the cost of the Air Force to the States? That would make the Federal budget look better. But it is not a real savings to our citizens if they have to pay out of their pocket at their home State or in their city, or if they have to pay part in their income taxes. That is no savings. That is a fake savings. That is a smokescreen to tell people: We are cutting government expenditures. No, we are not. We are just shifting them to another level of government where you are going to have to pay for them there as well.

But to get back to Medicaid. Seventy percent of the nursing home residents in Maine are covered by Medicaid. Who are they? They are people who can't be cared for at home any longer. They require nearly constant care and support. These aren't welfare recipients. These are our former teachers, police officers, the people who looked after us, the carpenters who built our houses, the nurses who cared for us in hospitals, the wait staff who served us meals, the veterans who served in times of trouble and fought for our freedom.

They and their families are simply part of our communities. They are not welfare recipients. They are people who have paid their fair share throughout their lives. They have worked hard. They have done all the things they were supposed to do, all the things that were expected of them. They stayed in their homes, by and large, as long as they possibly could. But at some point, after their assets and ability to pay were exhausted, they had Medicaid to help them in terms of long-term care.

I often say when I talk about this that it really frustrates me that we talk about this healthcare issue in terms of ideology and the free market and all of these kinds of things. No, this is about people.

This is about Jim and Cora Banks from Portland, ME. They lived in Portland. He was a State employee, and she was a beautician, who worked out of her home and most of her energy went into raising four boys. Cora was a den mother and Scout leader. They worked on projects and—can you believe it—all four of their boys were Eagle Scouts. That is an astonishing accomplishment, to have four sons as Eagle Scouts. They were active in the Kiwanis and taught Sunday school. One of their sons was involved in Little League. So Cora raised money to build a concession stand on the field, which is still used today.

At 55, tragically, Cora began to have memory issues. Because they had health insurance—because they had health insurance—she could get great care at a geriatric practice in Portland. Friends and family were helpful, and Jim was the principal caregiver for many years. But at 70, it became clear that Cora needed full-time care, and Jim could not provide that level of care. The doctors said she needed to be

in a residential setting. Her assets were exhausted. She qualified for MaineCare, which is what we call Medicaid. Her nursing home care was covered, and she lived for a year in that nursing home.

Two-thirds of the income for all of our nursing homes in Maine come from Medicaid, from MaineCare. What happens to this resource of the nursing homes if suddenly their revenues are significantly cut? What happens? But, mostly, what happens to people like Cora?

There is also an idea—and I heard the head of the OMB talk about it: We are not really cutting; we are just cutting the rate of growth. Well, if the demand is growing, the cost is growing, and you cut the rate of growth, you are cutting. Less money will be available than is necessary to meet the need. That is a real cut.

All of us know we are facing a demographic bulge from the baby boom generation, who are aging and are going to require more and more medical treatment, and they are going to put a greater demand on our nursing homes.

In Maine, we are projecting a 105,000-person increase in the next 10 years of people over 65. One in four Maine people will be over 65 in the next two decades.

The Alzheimer's Association projects that 35,000 Maine seniors will be afflicted with the tragic disease of Alzheimer's within 10 years; 25,000 had the disease in 2014. People with dementia are 10 times more likely to live in a nursing home.

There is a lot in the bill, I am told. I don't know; I haven't seen it. I have been looking for it. But the central premise seems to be, if it is anything like the House bill, a massive cut in Medicaid and a massive tax cut to the people in our society who least need it. The tax cut is targeted at the very wealthiest Americans. Yet the results of that decision will be to cut essential medical support for elderly people, disabled people, and children. I don't understand that bargain. I don't understand that equation—a gigantic tax cut to the wealthiest and a substantial cut in support for those who most need it.

Maybe I will be pleasantly surprised when I see the bill, whenever that is. I hope it is more than a few hours before we are called upon to vote on it. Right now, what we are hearing and what we are learning and what the House bill looked like would be a tragedy for this country and a tragedy for real people.

I don't understand the impulse to give a tax cut and to hurt people when we know that is going to be the case. And again, these are not welfare recipients; these are your friends and neighbors.

In all of our States, almost two-thirds of the nursing home residents are on Medicaid. We are not going to be able to cut Medicaid in the dramatic way that has been proposed without affecting those people.

I hope this body will take the time necessary to analyze this issue, to

openly debate it, to argue about it, and to find solutions that make sense and will work for the people of America, not try to ram something through for the purpose of checking a box on a campaign promise made years ago.

The reality is, we have an obligation, in my view, not only to solve the problem in a compassionate and rational and efficient way but also to develop and run a process here that respects the institution and respects the American people.

This is not the way this place is supposed to run—to have a bill drafted in secret, brought to the floor within hours or a few days of voting, and then force a vote without the kind of consideration, hearings, input, argument, and debate that is supposed to be the hallmark of this institution.

This is a very important decision, I think one of the most important any of us will ever make. I, for one, am going to be able to tell my children and grandchildren that I stood for Maine, for our children, for our elderly, for our disabled people. And when the chips are down, the United States Senate is going to do the right thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Iowa.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, no choice and a proposed 43-percent increase in premiums—that is what ObamaCare and its harmful impact will bring to Iowa in 2018. This year, it brought premium increases up to 42 percent. Last year, it brought increases up to 29 percent. ObamaCare is not sustainable and not affordable for Iowans.

To anybody who has studied healthcare reform, this should come as no surprise. In the past, many States have tried to reform their individual market. Twenty-seven years ago, Kentucky made an attempt and implemented the Kentucky Health Care Reform Act of 1994. This bill was similar to ObamaCare in many respects. It contained more taxes, more regulations, and more mandates. Within 3 years—3 years—insurers fled the individual market and the State was hit with skyrocketing premiums.

What happened in Kentucky then is eerily similar to what is happening in Iowa today as a result of ObamaCare. When it comes to affordability and choice, my home State of Iowa has been hit particularly hard.

While traveling across the State, I hear from Iowans who are looking for affordable coverage. Far too often, I hear that high monthly premiums are squeezing pocketbooks and that soaring out-of-pocket costs, such as deductibles and copays, make coverage unaffordable to use for those who do have it. That is not what ObamaCare promised, but that is what it has brought.

One Iowan who works at a small business in Hinton wrote to me and said:

Over the past seven years, prices have jumped considerably and the coverage em-

ployees are getting for the amount of money spent is substantially less! We have tried to help our employees by minimizing the changes in premiums, but these last two years we had to start passing on some of the increases in order to survive.

We can no longer absorb the constant rate increases, nor can we not offer a health plan to our employees. Therefore, we find ourselves between the proverbial rock and the hard place. We certainly are not the only small business facing the same dilemma.

Employees at this small business can breathe a small sigh of relief because their employer still has the ability to offer coverage, even if they are forced to pay more and more because of ObamaCare. Other Iowans are on the edge because their options for coverage are shrinking.

In 2016, UnitedHealthcare left the individual market in Iowa. A few months ago, Wellmark and Aetna both announced they would be leaving the individual market in 2018. Medica is the only remaining statewide carrier, and while they appear to be staying for the next year, it will take a massive rate increase on Iowans for them to do so.

The Iowa insurance commissioner said:

Iowa has hit a point within our market's collapse that a 43 percent rate increase will drive healthier, younger, and middle aged individuals out of the market. Iowa's individual market remains unsustainable.

If Medica leaves after next year, there is a very real possibility that tens of thousands of Iowans will have nothing to purchase on the individual market.

To put this issue into perspective and show why it matters so much, I want to share concerns I received from a constituent in Ames, IA. This constituent is the parent of a child with a rare disease. The family purchased a plan from Wellmark to cover the child for 2017, but now that Wellmark plans to leave, the parents are unsure whether they will be able to find a plan for their child. They find this whole experience “disruptive and anxiety provoking.”

Disruption and anxiety are not being felt just in Iowa; all across the country, premiums are skyrocketing and choices are limited and in some places, nonexistent. Recent data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services shows that 2.4 million people in 1,200 counties across the country will have one option for insurance in 2018. That is not an option at all. A recent report by HHS found that between 2013 and 2017, premiums more than doubled on the exchange—more than doubled on the exchange. In some States, premiums tripled.

Across the country and in my home State of Iowa, we don't have the option to continue with the status quo when it comes to our healthcare. The reality is, the status quo is truly unsustainable.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. 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. REED. As a proud resident of Rhode Island and proud resident of Providence Plantations, I thank the Chair for the recognition.

Mr. President, I want to join my colleagues in expressing strong opposition to the Republican efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to ask my Republican colleagues to abandon these efforts. They are crafted behind closed doors, and they embrace a huge tax cut for the wealthy at the expense of the most vulnerable among us.

Indeed, I implore Republicans to work with us on a bipartisan basis, in good faith, to make improvements to our healthcare system. We can make these improvements. I hope we can.

Just a couple of weeks ago, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office told us that 23 million Americans would lose health insurance under TrumpCare. Let me say that again: 23 million Americans will lose health insurance under the Republican bill. That is more people than live in Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming, the District of Columbia, and my home State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations combined—a huge portion of Americans. That is a shocking number.

What is worse is that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle plan to dismantle our healthcare system—one-sixth of the country's economy—without so much as a hearing to get input on the bill. Their bill is being written in secret, and from what we can glean of the process the Republicans are employing, we likely will not even see the text in the near future, although I am encouraged that there is some discussion of releasing the text tomorrow. Regardless of whether it is released tomorrow, there has been no deliberate consideration in a hearing. There has been no thoughtful interaction between Republicans and Democrats.

In sharp contrast, I was a member of the HELP Committee while we drafted the Affordable Care Act. The Senate spent 25 consecutive days in session on consideration of the Affordable Care Act, the second longest consecutive session in the history of the Senate. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, which I served on at the time, held more than 47 bipartisan hearings, roundtables, and walkthroughs on health reform. In fact, the HELP Committee considered over 300 amendments over the course of a month-long markup, one of the longest in the history of the Congress.

Over half of the accepted amendments were from Republicans. This bipartisan input, along with testimony and consultation from healthcare organizations representing hospitals, doc-

tors, nurses, and patients, among others, over the course of a year led to a better, more informed bill.

We have a lengthy legislative process for a reason. Yet the Republican leadership—up until this moment at least—continues to write their bill in secret as they look for ways to convince their caucus to support a bill that nearly every major healthcare organization opposes, to say nothing of the 23 million Americans across all of our States who would lose their health coverage, and millions more would seek increased costs because of TrumpCare.

I would like to remind everyone that these are real people who will be hurt if we go forward as my Republican colleagues intend to. These 23 million people are all our constituents, our family members, our friends and neighbors. In fact, since the beginning of this year, I have heard from thousands of my constituents from all walks of life, through phone calls, letters, emails, appearances at townhall events, and even those I see out and about shopping around the State or on the airplane to Washington and back to Rhode Island. They have all indicated how they have benefited from the ACA and how TrumpCare could have a devastating impact on their families.

For example, David from Providence, RI, wrote to me to tell me how his life has been affected by the Affordable Care Act. He said:

I don't usually write Senators, actually I've never written a Senator. I have great concerns about my healthcare. I have a pre-existing condition, two heart attacks and open heart surgery, triple bypass. I had medical issues and needed to leave my position at a full-time job 3 years ago to get well. During that leave, the company went chapter 11. I lost my healthcare and had no income. I was able to acquire Medical Insurance through the Affordable Care Act. I started my own design business as a sole proprietor and worked a second job to make ends meet. My healthcare was subsidized for two years. I am now successful in my design business and will be paying back the subsidy for this year and no longer need the subsidy going forward. I am able to purchase affordable healthcare through the Health Connection in RI. Affordable healthcare and the subsidy were there when I needed it. This allowed me to start my business and become a successful business/sole proprietor in RI. It is critical for my continued success to have access to affordable healthcare and not be judged by preexisting conditions.

As David describes, the Affordable Care Act gave individuals and families control over their healthcare for the first time. He was able to get the care he needed, regardless of preexisting conditions, and able to start a new business. This is something I have heard a number of times from my constituents.

I have also heard from Andrew and his wife in Little Compton, RI, who decided to strike out on their own and open a dairy farm after the Affordable Care Act was implemented. Andrew said: "We took this plunge and started a business knowing that the stability of health care was there—we have a

four year old daughter—and if it goes away, we are not sure what we will do."

Time and again, I hear from Rhode Islanders who are now free to take risks and start new businesses and other creative pursuits knowing that they will be able to access affordable healthcare. I ask my Republican colleagues: Do you want to go back to the days when people are locked into their jobs for health insurance? The only reason they are there is for health insurance. Their creativity, their ability to innovate and to invigorate our economy is stifled literally because they need the health insurance. Do you want to discourage your constituents from starting new businesses? Under TrumpCare, people like David, with preexisting conditions, would not have the option, and Andrew and his wife may not have been willing to take on the risk of leaving a job with health insurance to start a new business.

However, as we speak, my Republican colleagues are meeting in secret planning to take away these opportunities. I encourage my Republican colleagues to meet with their constituents, to hear their stories about the ACA. They are not unique to Rhode Island.

It is not enough to just ban insurance companies from denying coverage to people with preexisting conditions. The ACA eliminated annual and lifetime limits. In fact, yesterday I bumped into a family—two families—one with an adorable little girl who had a tracheotomy and who was being pushed around in a stroller. She is about 2 or 3 years old. And I met some other children, another young boy named Tim with a tracheotomy. Today I found out that their problem is lifetime limits. These are very young children, 2 years, 3 years old. Most insurance policies, except for the ACA, would have a lifetime limit. Now, you might be able to go buy it, but before these youngsters are 10, 12, or 13 years old, they will not have health insurance for the rest of their life.

So it is not just the preexisting conditions. The ACA eliminated annual and lifetime limits. When I saw those darling children yesterday, I just knew that has to be the law. Otherwise, it is just a matter of time. Maybe in 5 years, maybe in 6 years, but the kind of conditions they have, at some point, they will hit that limit and at some point the insurance company will say: No thanks.

We made those changes in the ACA. They are going to be disposed of in the proposals I have seen. The ACA requires coverage of basic healthcare services like maternity care. That is not guaranteed.

Before the ACA, insurance companies would cut off coverage just when it was needed most and priced people with health conditions out of the market. These are not abstract concepts. I hear from constituents each and every day about the importance of the critical consumer protections under the ACA,

and TrumpCare would undermine all of these.

Susan from Warwick wrote me to say:

ObamaCare saved my life. Please keep fighting to make affordable healthcare available to all Americans. I was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia in 2012. I have my own business and pay for my own health insurance. We always purchased what we thought was adequate, but I'd reached the limit on my policy within just a few weeks of cancer treatment. That left me with huge bills, a need for more expensive coverage in order to obtain lifesaving treatment . . . and technically with a "preexisting condition—cancer."

Susan knows that insurance doesn't mean much if you are sick and have limits on your care. She goes on to say:

I am horrified by the Republican plan to replace Obamacare. Health care is not a luxury. It should be available to all. I never want anyone else to experience the fear I did when my insurance ran out and I realized the care that could save my life might not be available to me. Before we found additional insurance—and jumped through hoops to get it—we looked at selling the house, emptying our IRAs and savings account to pay for my care. It would not have been enough.

Cynthia from Woonsocket, RI, wrote to me to tell me about how TrumpCare would undermine care for people like herself with Parkinson's disease. Specifically, Cynthia wrote about how patients with Parkinson's rely on the essential healthcare benefits required under the Affordable Care Act, including rehabilitative services, mental healthcare, and access to prescription drugs. TrumpCare would do away with these benefits.

Cynthia also points out that the average age of diagnosis of Parkinson's is around 60 years old. However, TrumpCare creates an age tax, leading to skyrocketing costs for this very population. Cynthia also said in her letter that one-third of patients with Parkinson's access care through Medicaid. She says TrumpCare puts all of those patients at risk of losing care. As a patient, she knows better than most that without these existing protections, health insurance will not actually cover the care that is needed.

To add more detail on how critical Medicaid can be, especially to seniors, a constituent living in a nursing home in Pascoag wrote to me to say:

I am 101 years old and enjoy every day to the best of my ability. I am petrified that many of the programs that I rely on for my health and well-being, indeed my life, will be reduced or even eliminated. Please protect my access to Medicaid. DO NOT make Medicaid a block grant to the states. My daughter is helping me to send this communication to you. Please do not forsake me.

So I ask my colleagues: How do you intend to protect her access to nursing home care while cutting Medicaid by over \$800 billion? Block-granting Medicaid, as Republicans have proposed to do, will reduce Medicaid funding by at least 25 percent over the next decade and leave States unable to maintain current Medicaid programs, leaving behind our most vulnerable.

Indeed, the most significant costs for Medicaid in my State and every other State is nursing home care. It is exactly those men and women, like my constituent from Pascoag, a vigorous 101-year-old, who will be forced to pay more, who will be forced because of cutbacks in service at the facility not to have two or three people on duty but just one. All of that we can foresee, and we only can prevent it if we reject this attempt to replace, to repeal, to undercut affordable care.

Now, this Medicaid crisis is serious, and it is not just going to affect the healthcare sector because we know the pressure is on the States to make up some of this lost funding. It will not just be by transferring funds within healthcare efforts. They will have to go everywhere through their budgets: That is K through 12 education. That is infrastructure. That is law enforcement. That is all the things States and localities do but particularly States. They will try to plug the gap because they will have people, like I have described who have written me, coming and not just demanding but obviously in need of healthcare, and they will try to respond, but the response will affect our competitiveness, our education systems, our productivity, when you can't fix infrastructure, and it will be a profound impact.

In fact, a significant number of jobs in my State and a significant number of jobs projected for the future are in the healthcare industry. When this significant reduction of resources to the healthcare sector comes about, the jobs will go, too, because without the resources, you will not employ people—you can't employ people.

Let me share a letter from one of my constituents because it succinctly describes what TrumpCare will really mean for this country. Glenn and Paula from Wakefield, RI, shared a letter from their daughter, Gianna, who has type 1 diabetes, saying:

Let me offer you a translation of what your votes mean: I will die younger and sicker. Probably much sicker. My kids will have a mother for less of their lives. Your votes are what will cause this. Because no matter how consciously I care for myself, no matter how responsible I am, it won't matter if my insurance refuses to cover me. And it won't matter for you either, if you are one of the vast majority of Americans who will end up with a pre-existing condition over the course of your life. If you think you can simply pay the costs yourself, you are in for a rude awakening.

These are only a few examples of the letters, calls, and emails I have received from constituents. The response in opposition to TrumpCare has been overwhelming by the very people whom it will impact the most. I hope my colleagues will listen to these concerns, not just the Rhode Island stories I am sharing today but also from their own constituents. People's lives are at stake.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to abandon this effort to pass TrumpCare and start working

with us on bipartisan solutions to improve our healthcare system.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today, having returned from the weekend in Wyoming, talking to people as a physician, and talking to former patients of mine. What I see is that the pain of ObamaCare is continuing to worsen around the country for men, women, families, and people who have been living under the Obama healthcare law for a number of years now.

This is an important day, when insurance companies have to come up with the filings and the plans on what they plan to do for next year with regard to plans that meet the ObamaCare mandate. So very soon, millions of people will find out if they are going to be able to buy an insurance plan in their own communities, regardless of the cost. We have seen that the Blue Cross Blue Shield group in Maryland has proposed rate increases up to 58 percent for next year in the State of Maryland. This is after they went up 24 percent last year. How many families can afford such a thing? But that is what we are dealing with.

That is why it is so critical that we get involved in trying to provide relief for American families at this time, with the Obama healthcare insurance market, certainly, collapsing. The head of Blue Cross Blue Shield in Maryland, which is the largest insurer in the State, has said that they see their system is in the early throes of what is known as the insurance death spiral. Prices are continuing to go up, fewer people are signing up, and, as a result, prices are going to have to be raised even more. We saw last year that they went up 24 percent, and this year the proposal, going forward to next year, is 58 percent. This is a terrifying reality for people on ObamaCare today.

One of the big reasons we have been working so hard on healthcare reform is to improve access to healthcare—not empty coverage, but actual healthcare. So what we want to do as Republicans is get rid of some of the excessive mandates, the expensive mandates, things that are driving up the cost of care and certainly driving up the cost of coverage for that care.

When prices come down, people are able to afford insurance and companies are ready to sell that insurance. I know we have people in Wyoming who are ready to buy it. That is how you improve access to insurance. It is how you also improve access to care. You don't do it by forcing the prices up and

then requiring people to buy coverage, which is what the Democrats who voted for ObamaCare did. They said: You have to buy it, it is a mandate, whether you like it or not. We know better than you do. That is what we heard from the Democrats during the debate on President Obama's healthcare law. That is what they passed. They passed it. They voted for it. They didn't know what was in it. Actually, it was the Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI, who said: First you have to pass it before you even get to find out what is in it.

President Obama gave a big speech to a joint session of Congress and said that if people like their plans, they can keep their plans. One of the newspapers called that the "Lie of the Year." So millions of Americans then got letters from insurance companies; over 5,000 in Wyoming got that letter. It said: Sorry, your insurance plan isn't good enough for government.

People ought to be able to make that decision for themselves. Families ought to make that decision, not Democrats in Washington who voted for the ObamaCare law. They shouldn't have the right to tell the people of my State or any State what is best for them and their family. It is interesting because the Democrats don't seem to want to remember that anymore. They have selective amnesia.

It turned out that if people liked their plan, they weren't really allowed to keep it. I heard about it again a week ago at a Wyoming stock growers meeting—farmers and ranchers from around the State of Wyoming who come together each year, an organization that has been in existence longer than the State has been a State. These are hard-working people who know what works best for them, what works best for their families. Some of these outfits have been in those families for 100 years. We have something called the Centennial Ranch program where they gather all the family members when an outfit has been in that family for 100 years, and they have been able really to survive so much over the years. Often they would say, you know, whether they deal with floods, whether they deal with fire, the biggest problem they have is often dealing with the Federal Government. We have seen it all across the board, and healthcare is just one of the last things to add to a long litany of Federal Government involvement in the lives of the people of our State of Wyoming.

So here we are today with this incredible government overreach and the failure of that overreach, and even the insurance companies, some of whom supported the passage of the healthcare law, are saying that this is not working. How they reflect the fact that it is not working is they say: OK, we are not going to sell insurance anymore. You can't make them sell insurance. The prices have to go up too much, and it is just not worth the effort.

One of the big insurance companies, Humana, is dropping out of the

ObamaCare exchange entirely next year. They made the announcement. Aetna said that it is quitting the internal markets in Delaware, Iowa, Nebraska, and Virginia. Anthem is pulling out of Ohio. The list goes on.

Now, so far, there are over 40 counties across the country that are expected to have no one selling insurance on the exchange—no one. In Wyoming, we are down to one company that sells it. We had two; one lost so much money, they were pulled off of the market. The second one, which does sell insurance in Wyoming, continues to lose money by selling on the exchange. They are committed to stay, but they just scratch their heads about what the potential future may hold. We are now seeing over 40 counties across the country where no one is selling insurance. That is the reality of ObamaCare.

Remember, President Obama said: If you pass this, there will be huge competition, big marketplaces. If there is only one selling insurance, it is not a marketplace; it is a monopoly.

Next year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has said that about 40 percent of all the counties in America will have just one company selling on the exchange—just one—forty percent of the counties all across America. That is a monopoly. What happens when those companies decide to drop out?

Even for people who get an ObamaCare subsidy, if there is no one in that community, in that county selling ObamaCare insurance, the subsidy has no value whatsoever. It can't be used.

That is another part of the story that the Democrats refuse to talk about. In fact, Democrats say a lot of things about insurance coverage that aren't really telling the whole story. They have talked about the Congressional Budget Office report; they talk about a number of things. One of the interesting things about the Congressional Budget Office report—the CBO report, kind of the scorekeepers that take a look at things—on the bill that passed the House said that there will be millions of people fewer who will have insurance if the Republican-passed bill becomes law. Well, the news headlines screamed that the House bill would mean millions of people lose their insurance. Well, that is wrong. That is not at all what will happen.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, when you look at it and see why is it that there will be fewer people with insurance under ObamaCare if you eliminate the individual mandate—the part of the law that says you must buy a government-approved program—the Congressional Budget Office says that if you don't mandate it, a lot of people don't want to buy it. They don't view it as a good benefit to them. They don't view it as worth their money.

If people aren't required to buy insurance, millions of them will choose not to purchase the insurance, especially

when they believe it is not a good deal for them personally. I believe Americans have that right. Apparently, the Democrats don't believe that Americans have that right. They like the mandate. They like making people do things. That, to me, is the difference between a Republican approach, which provides for freedom, and a Democratic approach of government and mandates.

We want to give people the right to decide what is right for them and their families. That is what I hear in Wyoming at the Wyoming Stock Growers Association and as I travel around the State. People know what is best for them and their families. Then, when all of a sudden what they had is taken off the market because the government says that you can't sell it anymore, that is an affront to their ability to choose what works for them and their family, and it is things they have had in the past. Then they got stuck buying some very expensive plan that covered a lot of things they didn't need, didn't want, and couldn't afford, but the government said: We know better than you do, the people of Wyoming, the people of America.

So the Congressional Budget Office says that 8 million people who get coverage in the individual market will decide it is just not worth buying. They also said that there will be 4 million people on Medicaid next year, and if you eliminate the mandate, they aren't going to sign up for it, even when it is free, because they realize that, for many people, being on Medicaid—a failing system—isn't providing much for them at all.

So insurance isn't being taken from people; these are people who are making a decision as free individuals—Americans—of how they want to spend their money and what they want to sign up for, or not.

So the legislation that passed the House really makes no changes in Medicaid in 2018. Yet, the CBO says millions of people on Medicaid will drop it when the mandate goes away.

The Senate is coming up with its own solution. We are looking at ways to make sure that Americans have access to insurance that works for them, not just what works for Democrats in Washington. We roll back some of the worst parts of ObamaCare. Prices for health insurance will go down. People will have better options than the one-size-fits-all plans that Washington has forced on the American people. They will have other options that will work better for them and their families.

Our goal is to not do what the Democrats did. ObamaCare actually kicked people off insurance that worked for them, pulled the rug right out from under them; Republicans don't want to pull the rug out from anyone. Our goal is to reform the American healthcare system so that insurance costs less and it meets the needs of the people who buy it. Republicans' goal is to focus on care, not just useless coverage that ObamaCare had provided for many,

with narrower networks so you can't keep your doctor, you can't go to the hospital in your community, you can't get the care you need, you can't see certain specialists, which is what we have seen with ObamaCare.

If Democrats want to talk about people losing their insurance, they need to look at what ObamaCare is doing to people right now. They need to look at people who are losing their insurance because their insurers are walking away from them. They need to look at people who are losing their insurance because of the premium increases we are seeing requested in Maryland; 24 percent is actually how much it went up last year and 58 percent in certain areas requested for this year.

Now I hear the Democrats say that they are worried about whether people with preexisting conditions get insurance. As a doctor, I will tell you, my wife is a breast cancer survivor; we are absolutely committed as Republicans to make sure that no one with a preexisting condition is left out. Democrats can't make that claim. They have made it over the years. But if there is no one selling insurance where you live, there is no exchange being offered, and you live in those 40 counties right now with no one selling—none—zero, and that number of counties is going to expand next year—if you have a preexisting condition and you are living under ObamaCare, you cannot get insurance no matter what any Democrat says, because no one is willing to sell it to you, even if you get a government subsidy—no one. You are left out. That is what the Democrats have given us in this country with their failed ObamaCare system.

So ObamaCare continues collapsing. It is going to harm more Americans who have preexisting conditions.

The other day, Senator SCHUMER admitted that ObamaCare isn't providing affordable access to care. I think it is an important admission from the minority leader. Now it is time for him and the Democrats to join with Republicans in the Senate—join us in providing Americans the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as the Senate knows—and I suspect a lot of people outside of the Chamber know—we will move forward on the healthcare reform effort to repeal and replace ObamaCare very soon. A bill will be released as early as tomorrow morning, representing a discussion draft.

I think it is important to remind all of our colleagues of the urgency that

we face. We already know that insurance premiums have gone up since 2013 alone for those in the individual market—those would be individuals with small businesses—by 105 percent. This is 2013. Can you imagine in 2013 paying a premium only to realize that over the next 4 years, it would quadruple in just a short period of time?

Most Americans can't absorb that additional cost. We know that many people are struggling from the high cost and the lack of quality of care and the choices available to them.

Again, on the cost issue, when ObamaCare was being sold to the American people, I still remember President Obama saying that the average family of four would see a decrease in their premiums of \$2,500. I think the correct figure is based on experience. They have seen their premiums go up \$3,000.

I shared a story last week about a small business owner in Texas who had lost his healthcare. He lost his doctor, and yet he had to pay astronomically more for what ends up to be less coverage. I would say he is only one person who I have heard from. I have heard from many, many more under similar circumstances.

Even those who receive their healthcare from their employer are feeling trapped by ObamaCare. I had a constituent, for example, from Needville, TX, and his story, yet again, is all too familiar. After his employer renewed their healthcare plan, premiums rose 50 percent, and his current doctors refused to accept his plan from the ObamaCare marketplace. While his healthcare costs rose, of course, his salary did not follow suit.

He has been forced to dramatically cut back on his standard of living and is living from paycheck to paycheck. In his letter, he said he is worried about being able to provide for his family. Can you imagine what that must be like? And not thinking of himself, but what this means for his coworkers, as well, and his community.

This is one of the endless stories that my constituents have sent me over the past few years, and I know Texas isn't alone, which causes me to wonder who our colleagues are listening to or not listening to in their States.

I mentioned yesterday that I had one colleague, whose name I won't mention out of respect for his confidential communication—this is a Democratic Senator—who has a son who has seen his insurance premiums go up to \$7,500. Sorry, that is the deductible. But his premium has gone up \$5,000. He told me that his son's out-of-pocket costs for healthcare was \$12,500 a year.

That is another casualty of ObamaCare. Yet, when we are looking around to see how many Democrats are willing to join us to come to the rescue of people who are being hurt by the destruction of the healthcare markets, we see no one raising their hand or coming forward.

For our Democratic friends to attack us for trying to fix the havoc that they

wreaked in our healthcare system is really ridiculous. Our friends on the other side of the aisle had their chance. They passed ObamaCare by a party-line vote. In the interim, it demonstrated that this is an experiment in big government and massive spending that has simply failed.

Our friends on the other side know that. They also realize that, regardless of who won the election in November, we would be moving towards a new, better healthcare alternative, but they are simply unwilling to participate and are sitting on their hands and waiting. Indeed, they are hoping that we will fail in our efforts to save many Americans—millions of Americans—from a healthcare system they were promised but one that was not delivered.

Instead of working with us, they effectively are throwing what could only be called a temper tantrum. They are trying to shut down any productive activity in the Senate, including bipartisan committee work.

I was in three committee hearings this morning, one involving the Intelligence Committee and our investigation into Russian active measures involving the 2016 election. I was in another important Finance Committee hearing where we talked about the importance of modernizing the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, and then another one in the Judiciary Committee, where we talked about the influx of dangerous gangs into the United States, including MS-13, from Central American countries. Yet our Democratic colleagues are so bent out of shape over the healthcare debate that they are willing to shut down legitimate bipartisan concerns for each of those issues by not letting our committees operate as they should.

Here is the rub. If they actually had a better plan, we would be more than happy to listen. We would be more than happy to work with them. But the only thing they have offered has been offered by the Senator from Vermont—one of their Presidential candidates—Mr. SANDERS, who said that what he wants is nothing less than a complete Federal Government takeover of healthcare, the so-called single-payer system. That would wipe out all private insurance, and you would be looking to the government for all of your healthcare.

We know that hasn't worked particularly well in places like Canada and England and elsewhere. We also know that it is completely unaffordable. The Urban Institute, which did a study of Senator SANDERS' single-payer healthcare system, said that just in 2017 alone, it would add more than a half trillion dollars to Federal spending, and it would add trillions and trillions of dollars more over ensuing years. This isn't a solution. This is creating a bigger problem.

Unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues have let the far left faction of

their own conference hold them hostage to pushing for a single-payer system that would make ObamaCare look like a wild and resounding success.

As I said, we need only look to our neighbors to the north, who under a single-payer system have their healthcare decisions decided for them by the government, while they see their taxes go up every single day.

Canada is marketed as an affordable outcome, but only if your procedure is deemed necessary by the government. In other words, if the government doesn't think the procedure you need is necessary, good luck with that.

Would you want somebody in the government making your medical decisions for you or your family without considering your individual medical history? I certainly wouldn't. Under a single-payer system, this could lead to many families having to buy supplemental health insurance on top of the taxes they have already paid or simply pay cash, rewarding high-income individuals with a better level of healthcare above that offered to the rank-and-file citizens under a government program.

Single-payer systems are not a solution, certainly not in this country. Not only is choice and cost threatened under a single-payer system, but so is quality of care.

Just last year in Canada, it took an average of 20 weeks for patients to receive medical care that was deemed necessary—the longest recorded wait time since wait times began to be tracked. One report estimated the Canadians are waiting for nearly 1 million healthcare procedures.

Can you imagine having to wait up to 38 weeks for some medical procedure, the whole time worrying about your health or the health of your loved one?

Single-payer is a costly, inefficient, and unfeasible option, and, perhaps because of that, we are not hearing many people on the floor stating what I believe to be the case, which is that it is the only choice being offered by our friends across the aisle. They are not willing to come here and debate the merits of what we are proposing, which is a market-driven, individual-choice system, which is designed to keep premiums down in a way that makes it more affordable. They are not willing to debate that and a government takeover known as a single-payer option with all of its assorted problems.

The reforms we are seeking are patient-centered and market-driven. These are the sorts of things that many of our colleagues across the aisle said they would like to see as well, but they have somehow fallen in line with part of their political base, which makes it impossible for them to have an open, rational discussion about the merits of each proposal.

We are left with no option but to finalize our discussion draft and introduce that tomorrow so that the world can see it and so it can be put on the internet, so we can have a fulsome de-

bate and we can have unlimited amendments in the so-called vote-arama process, which I know is very popular around here. We will vote dozens of times or more on proposed amendments to the bill. That is the kind of transparency and openness that I think are important when you are dealing with something as important as healthcare.

Here are the goals of what we are going to propose tomorrow in this discussion draft.

First, we need to stabilize the markets that have left millions in the country with no choices when it comes to insurance providers. Under ObamaCare, insurance markets have collapsed. In Texas, one-third of Texas counties have only one option for health insurance, which is no choice whatsoever. Of course, in addition to threatening competition, it also lowers quality while doing nothing about rising costs.

Second, we have to address the ballooning price of ObamaCare premium increases. I mentioned, just in the ObamaCare exchanges since 2013, they have gone up 105 percent. If we do nothing about it, they are going to go up by double digits again next year, so doing nothing is not an option. Again, without competition, there is no room for these prices to go anywhere but up, and we have to come to the rescue of the millions of Americans who are simply being priced out of the health insurance market.

Third, something our Democratic colleagues have repeatedly called for is that we have to protect people with preexisting conditions. If we want our healthcare system to work, we must be able to provide coverage, particularly for preexisting conditions, for all Americans. We will do that in the discussion draft proposed tomorrow.

Lastly, I believe we need to give the States greater flexibility when providing for the low-income safety net known as Medicaid, in a way that is more cost-efficient and effective. For example, in my State, we have asked for a waiver in order to provide managed care for people on Medicaid. More than 90 percent are on managed care, which means if you have a chronic illness—if you have a particularly complicated medical problem—you have a medical home and somebody keeping track of your treatment, making sure you get the treatment you need and are entitled to.

Now we have the opportunity to make Medicaid a sustainable program. We know that it is not, as currently written. What we are proposing is to spend more money each year on Medicaid but to do so at a cost-of-living index that will be affordable and sustainable by the American taxpayer. We have the opportunity to address the quality issues and redtape issues and provide this important entitlement to make sure that it remains on a stable path.

The American people have made clear, time and again, that the status

quo of ObamaCare is not working. All you have to do is look around. There were 60 Democratic Senators in 2010 who voted for ObamaCare. They were in the majority—a big majority. How many are there today? Well, there are not 60 anymore. They have gone from the majority to the minority, I believe, in large part because of the unfulfilled promises of ObamaCare.

I encourage our colleagues across the aisle—indeed, I encourage all of us to listen to the stories from our constituents. There are too many families asking us to step up and come to their aid. We need to do more than just give floor speeches or loft impossible single-payer options, which simply won't work. We need to actually deliver on the promises we made to deliver healthcare reform and to do so to the best of our ability.

I am under no illusion that this will be perfect. Indeed, when you are operating under the constraints of the budget rules, with Democrats taking a walk and sitting on their hands, it is impossible for us to come up with the best possible product we could under the circumstances. But I dare say, it will be better than the status quo, which is a meltdown in the insurance markets, and we will take large steps forward in not only stabilizing the markets but bringing premiums down, while assuring coverage for preexisting conditions and putting Medicaid on a sustainable path forward.

We invite our Democrat colleagues to join us, if they will. But under present circumstances, it doesn't look as though they plan to do so.

REQUESTS FOR AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. President, I have nine requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They do not have the approval of the Democratic leader; therefore, they will not be permitted to meet today beyond 2 p.m. But I ask unanimous consent that a list of the committees requesting authority to meet be printed in the RECORD.

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

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
 Committee on Finance
 Committee on Foreign Relations
 Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
 Committee on the Judiciary
 Committee on Intelligence
 Subcommittee on Seapower
 Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if I could take 30 seconds more—because my colleague from Louisiana is here—I, frankly, think the objection to nine committees meeting in the Senate is indefensible. I mentioned the three committee hearings we had this morning, but they are just an indicator of important issues, such as the investigation by the Intelligence Committee of Russian involvement in our election; the Judiciary Committee looking into

the role of MS-13, one of the most dangerous and violent street gangs in America, with about 10,000 gang members present in the United States. We are looking at things like trade and the importance of modernizing NAFTA and the 5 million jobs that binational trade supports with Mexico or the 8 million jobs with Canada.

For our Democratic colleagues to object to our being able to meet in committees because of their pique over healthcare—which they have voluntarily taken themselves out of—is just beyond indefensible. I hope the American people realize exactly what they are doing. This is the temper tantrum I talked about a moment ago. This is not about having an open and honest debate and trying to solve a problem that, frankly, is not just our problem; it is a problem for all Americans. We ought to do better than that. We ought to hold ourselves to a higher standard than that. But this is the kind of temper tantrum, unfortunately, you get when a political party is not willing to participate in the debate and where they have no ideas that are actually workable, other than a single-payer system that will bankrupt the country and will fail to deliver quality healthcare to all our citizens.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The Senator from Louisiana.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I am also here to comment, as Senator CORNYN has, on the state of play, if you will, and the repeal and replacement of ObamaCare. I think sometimes the American people feel like collateral damage as Republicans and Democrats go back and forth as to what is the best policy.

I am a physician, a doctor who worked in a public hospital for the uninsured for decades before I went into politics. I guess from my perspective, the primary thing is not Republican versus Democrat, but that patient who is struggling to pay her bills, her premiums, or the fellow who can't afford medicine. What are we doing for them?

There is a gentleman who went on my Facebook page—again, cutting through this kind of political noise. This is Brian from Covington, LA:

My family plan is \$1,700 a month, me, my wife and 2 children. The ACA has brought me to my knees. I hope we can get something done. The middle class is dwindling away. Can everyone just come together and figure this out?

If that is not a plaintive plea of someone who is drowning under the cost of premiums for insurance, which he knows he has and, as a responsible father and husband, he will work to pay for—nonetheless, he says that he is being crushed by these high premiums.

The American people need relief. We have to lower those premiums. I have always said, though, that whatever we do must pass the Jimmy Kimmel test; that is, to say that if Brian's wife or children or he himself has a terrible ill-

ness, there will be adequate coverage to pay for the care their family would need for that member of their family with that terrible disease. It kind of brings us to where we are now—two aspects to what we are considering.

By the way, when folks say that we are redoing one-sixth of the economy, that is not true. The Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, again, attempted to address one-sixth of the economy that is healthcare. We are focused on the individual market, which is about 4 percent of those insured, and Medicaid. We are not touching Medicare. We are not touching the employer-sponsored insurance market. It is important to realize that this is not as comprehensive as the Affordable Care Act. It is something far more focused.

Let's first talk about Medicaid. I am very concerned about what has been proposed for Medicaid, but also concerned about current law regarding Medicaid. Under the Medicaid expansion in the Affordable Care Act, States got 100 percent of all the cost of the patients enrolled for the first 4 to 5 years. As you might expect, States were quite generous in their payments for these patients as they contracted with Medicaid-managed care companies to care for them, so much so that those folks enrolled in Medicaid expansion. Taxpayers are paying 50 percent more than taxpayers are paying for those in traditional Medicaid. And States enrolled roughly 20 million people in the Medicaid expansion program. The combination of enrolling so many people in the Medicaid expansion program and paying 50 percent more than for traditional Medicaid means that when States finally have to foot 10 percent of the bill, which they will by 2020—when States have to finally foot that 10 percent of the bill, they cannot afford that 10 percent.

Unfortunately, under the Affordable Care Act, State taxpayers will not be able to pay what in California is \$2.2 billion extra per year as the State's 10-percent share. Similarly in Louisiana, my State, our taxpayers—me, my colleagues, my friends, my neighbors—would be on the hook for \$310 million per year. Our State is having a budget crisis because we can't afford \$300 million. Now it is a \$310 million recurring bill every year.

One thing that is not said is that Medicaid expansion in its current format is not sustainable. We have to do something—again, to preserve benefits for that patient. We have to take care of that patient, but we have to make it sustainable, both for the Federal taxpayer and the State taxpayer. By the way, whoever is watching this is both a Federal and State taxpayer. You are getting caught both ways.

Let me speak a little bit about the process. If you want to speak about Medicaid, we just laid it out. Let's speak a little about the process, as much has been said about it. I don't care for how the process transpired, but I certainly understand Leader

MCCONNELL's concerns that Democrats would not collaborate. I find that a sorry state of affairs.

What do I mean by that? SUSAN COLLINS and I, and four other Republican Senators, put forward a bill that would allow Democratic States to continue in the status quo—to get the money they would have ordinarily received under the Affordable Care Act and to continue a system—as much as they desire to have—for the whole Nation.

The minority leader, CHUCK SCHUMER, condemned our bill before we filed it, meaning before he had a chance to read it. Without reading our bill, he condemned it, even though his State of New York would have been allowed to continue in the program that they are currently in and receive the dollars to support that program. He condemned the bill before he read it, even though it would have allowed his State to continue in the status quo.

Similarly, we approached other Senators—10, at least, on my part. None would help us with our bill, even though their State could have continued in its current status quo, receiving the income it currently receives. That tells me that even a good faith effort to reach across the aisle was not going to get cooperation. That is too bad, and that is why, I think, there is kind of a political back-and-forth in which the patient—the American like Brian, struggling to support and cover his family—gets lost in the crossfire. A goodwill bill, designed for States to do that which they wish to do, would not even be considered by the other side.

I have always pointed out that if even two Democrats had walked into MITCH MCCONNELL's office and said "We will work with you to pass a bill," they could have gotten far many more things for their State than saying "No, we have not been invited to the party; therefore, we will not participate." I say that as an observation, not as a criticism, but also as an explanation to the American people of how we have ended up in this position.

Now, as to the bill that will be before us, I have not seen the written language. I reserve judgment until I have seen that, but I will say that there are some things I like. If our desire, again, is to take that patient, the American citizen, and make sure his needs or her needs are met—a family such as Brian described here who cannot afford their current premiums—there are things in this bill which will lower those premiums. There is the so-called cost-sharing reduction payments for the next couple of years that would continue to provide certainty to the insurance companies so that when they market insurance on the individual market, there would be certainty. They would be able to know those dollars are coming from the Federal taxpayer to support folks for the next couple of years, and they could lower their premiums accordingly.

There will be a so-called State Stability Fund that going forward, States

could use to create what was called the invisible high-risk pool—a reinsurance program, if you will—so that if you are a patient on dialysis, a patient with cancer, very expensive to care for, you would continue to get the care you require, but everyone else in that insurance market has their premiums lowered because there is a little bit of help for those folks with those higher cost conditions. By that, we lower premiums.

President Trump, when he was running for President, said he wanted to continue coverage, care for those with preexisting conditions, eliminate the ObamaCare mandates, and lower premiums. What I have seen or, at least, heard is we are on the path to fulfilling President Trump's pledge. Now, again, reserving judgment until I have seen written language, I will say that what I have seen so far keeps the patient as the focus, would address someone like Brian, the needs of his family, the needs of their pocketbook as well as their health, and build a basis so that going forward, States would have the ability to innovate, to find a system that works best for them.

On behalf of those patients, I hope that we as a Senate—whatever our party—are successful. I hope going forward we, as a Senate, no matter what our party, put the patient as the focal point, hoping that our combined efforts—again, no matter what our party—will address her needs or his needs, both financially and particularly for their health.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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, earlier this week, on Monday morning at 9 a.m., I held a last-minute emergency field hearing on healthcare. With our colleagues on the other side of the aisle refusing to hold any official hearing on the bill and refusing to even show us the bill—what almost certainly is almost bad policy that is contained in the bill—I wanted the people of Connecticut to know that their voices and their faces would be heard and seen here in Washington, DC, and their stories would be told with or without an official committee hearing.

When I say this emergency field hearing was last minute, it was truly last minute, with many people having not even days but hours of advance notice to come and speak and share with me and others what the Affordable Care Act has meant to them, to their families, to their communities, and what losing it would mean to them.

To say the room was full would be a gross understatement. Every seat was filled, and when those seats were gone,

people lined the wall two or three deep and squeezed in through the door. They were so anxious to be heard, and they were loud and clear. They were heard by me, and now I want their voices to be heard here.

We are continuing this hearing. In fact, we are having a second hearing on Friday afternoon at 1:30 in New Haven. We are sending out notices, blasting them to the people of Connecticut. We will have a third, if appropriate and necessary.

The people who came to this emergency field hearing in Connecticut were no different from millions of other people around the country, and they were speaking, in a sense, for all Americans. In my mind, they were speaking for parents who are suffering, providers who are healing, kids fighting back against dreaded diseases. They came because the closed-door discussions held in secret here by a small number of colleagues across the aisle will impact them every single day for the rest of their lives. My constituents and the people of Connecticut and the people of the country are unrepresented in those discussions. That is a travesty and a betrayal of our trust and our job.

So, on Friday, we are going to do the same thing. We are holding another emergency hearing in New Haven so people of my State can be heard, despite this disgraceful process that has left them and so many others on the outside looking in. They are excluded from democracy, and that is unconscionable.

If nothing else, I hope my colleagues will realize one thing. This is what democracy looks like. This is how we are meant to make decisions with many opinions—much debate, diversity of viewpoint, sometimes messy but always transparent, open, and clear to people whose lives are affected by it. That is what this emergency field hearing was designed to do.

Since it is becoming increasingly clear that this bedrock principle of our democracy—the right to open and honest debate—is being denied, I want to share some of the stories I heard on Monday, just some of them, and I will be sharing more of these stories over the coming days.

Justice Brianna Crutch was described by her mother as a beautiful free spirit, as you can see from this side of the photo. She was filled with compassion and at 21 years old had a beautiful and meaningful life ahead of her, all of her life ahead of her. She was a full-time student in a dental program, and she had a 4.0 average.

Justice, like far too many people, particularly young people in Connecticut and around the country, had a substance use disorder, and she needed effective, long-term treatment to begin that road to recovery. For Justice, this treatment came too late, and on August 23, 2015, she overdosed on heroin. It led to a brain injury. It is likely she will never recover from that injury.

“More likely than not,” her mother said, “I will have to make the decision to bring my daughter home with hospice care. No parent should be faced with these decisions.” That is what Jennifer Kelly said at the hearing on Monday.

That is a picture of Justice as she is today.

I want to read exactly what Jennifer Kelly said because her words are far more powerful and meaningful than mine could ever be.

The American Health Care Act—

The House version of the so-called replacement for the Affordable Care Act—

would reduce Medicaid funding by \$800 million, which provides coverage to an estimated 3 in 10 adults dealing with an opioid addiction. This will be so devastating to those seeking treatment for an opioid addiction. In a system where families are already seeking help, this will be a tremendous step backwards.

So here I am, almost two years later, pleading for life, fighting once again for families I have never met, because I believe that no one should have to fight to get help for addiction in this country like my daughter did. So my question is, Mr. President and the members of the Senate, what number of lives lost will be enough? What is the magic number of sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles that we as a nation will have to lose before you realize this country needs help?

I ask that same question of my colleagues today. I ask the question that Jennifer, a brokenhearted mother, asked. What number of lives will be enough? How many is enough? When will others in this body realize that gutting our healthcare system and stripping millions of care will simply make this opioid epidemic worse?

Jennifer was unfortunately not the only person who came to speak about the opioid epidemic. For me, the most moving and powerful among those moments came from Maria Skinner, who runs the McCall Center for Behavioral Health in Connecticut, who was there to give her thoughts and share the stories of two young people. I was actually lucky enough to meet both of them. Once again, I am going to share her words directly:

What I want to do is talk to you about two people and make that a real, personal, granular, human story. . . . And you know these two people very well; it's Frank and Sean.

She was speaking to me.

[You] have met Frank and Sean, who were able to access care and get clean and sober because of the Medicaid expansion, because they were able to have coverage.

And they've come here, to these rooms, to speak courageously and publicly about their struggle and about their recovery, and about how grateful they are to be able to be clean and sober because of the access of care afforded them through their insurance coverage.

We went to Sean's funeral on Saturday, and . . . Frank would be here today if he wasn't as brokenhearted as I am. Sean was 26 and had been doing really well, was on Naltrexone, was taking a Vivitrol shot, and he had to have surgery for a hernia, because

he raced motorbikes professionally and the hernia hurt him. He wanted to go back and was doing so well, he was speaking publicly to youth and was anxious to go back into doing what he loved. So he had that surgery and had to come off of his medication to do that. He was very vulnerable after his surgery, and he slipped once, and he used.

I've been to too many funerals and seen too many mothers and fathers broken-hearted at the coffins of their sons and daughters. We can't make this any harder than it already is. To me, it is unconscionable.

Maria is right, and so is Jennifer. Gutting Medicaid would be unconscionable. Weakening the protections afforded to those with mental health or substance use disorder would be truly unconscionable. Repealing the Affordable Care Act and the provisions within it that have meant more coverage, more healthcare, and more healing for those suffering from substance use disorder and struggling to break the grip of this opioid epidemic would be unconscionable and costly beyond words.

Alternative funds, as some reports say Republicans have considered, will never replace a permanent insurance program like Medicaid because Medicaid guarantees that coverage is there when families need it. No alternative can do that.

In Connecticut, nearly half of all medication-assisted treatment for people with substance use disorders is paid by Medicaid. My fear is that the Republican bill in place will mean that these people would have no place to go. They would have no support for medications, counseling, and help, no chance to get better, no place to go. I refuse to let us find out the answer to what would happen to them if Medicaid were gutted. I refuse to allow it to happen, if I have anything to do with it.

People with substance use disorder are not the only ones who will see their coverage threatened by a weakening of protections for those with preexisting conditions. In Connecticut on Monday, Shawn Lang of AIDS-Connecticut expanded on what this bill would mean for the people living with HIV in this country.

Some of us lived through the early days of the plague when we went to funeral after funeral, memorial service after memorial service, week after week, month after month, watching our friends wither away and die. The healthcare bill that is currently secretly weaving its way through Congress would bring us back to the early days of the plague.

HIV is a preexisting condition. Over half of the people living with HIV in the country and in this state are over the age of 50 and rely on Medicaid as their primary source of insurance. Most of those people also have other co-morbidities like substance abuse disorders and mental health disorders. What little we know about this bill would be devastating to people with HIV and AIDS, and it essentially would amount to a death sentence. Once again, having lived through those early days, we don't want to go back there.

Shawn's story is one of many I heard about the fear of losing coverage due to a preexisting condition.

Gay Hyre, a 60-year-old breast cancer survivor, has similar concerns about

what gutting the Affordable Care Act would mean not just for her but for everyone around her. She said this about why she came to speak at the hearing:

I'm not just worried for me about my own care, although I will be on the receiving end of a lot of bad parts of this. I care passionately about the other 23 million Americans who are my fellow citizens of every age, type, and need. It's about the future, it's about our kids, it's about our grandkids who won't have access to treatments, who won't have access to doctors.

I know my colleagues across the aisle don't want to hear these stories. If they wanted to hear these stories from people in Connecticut and around the country, millions of stories, we would have hearings—not just emergency field hearings; we would have hearings here in Washington before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and before the Committee on Finance and other committees that have jurisdiction on the House side as well as in the Senate. We would be having a real debate, a robust discussion, and everyone of us here would have a chance to review this bill, if there is a bill, and comment on it and hear from the people we represent. But unfortunately my colleagues across the aisle don't want to hear about the details of repealing the Affordable Care Act.

One witness at my hearing, Ellen Andrews of the Connecticut Health Policy Project, really summed up the reason. Here is what she said:

We have been working on expanding health coverage, high-quality, affordable coverage to everyone in the state and now everyone in the nation. I looked back, actually, at 2010, how many people were uninsured in this state before the Affordable Care Act, it was 397,000 people, almost 400,000. Last year it was down by 262,000. That is 262,000 fewer people living in our state without insurance because of the Affordable Care Act.

I want to share one final story. It is about a little boy in Connecticut who has a lot to lose if the Affordable Care Act is secretly gutted behind closed doors, as is now happening in real time right before our eyes, in secret, invisibly, in this body. I want to tell you about Connor Curran.

Two years ago, when Connor was 5 years old, his parents noticed that he was lagging behind his twin brother. They brought him to a doctor. Rather than receiving a simple diagnosis, they learned that Connor has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a degenerative terminal disease that has no cure. Most people with the disease don't survive past their midtwenties. Connor's family wrote that their sweet boy, who was just 5 and full of life, would slowly lose his ability to run, to walk, to lift his arms. Eventually, they said, he would lose the ability to hug them at all.

Connor needs complex care from multiple specialists, costing an estimated \$54,000 a year. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, he cannot be denied coverage and has the coverage he needs to receive care. His family also wrote that any elimination of lifetime caps or elimination of essential health benefits

will hinder his family's ability to access the care that Conner needs.

This is Conner in a picture that has been provided by his family.

The ACA removed barriers to Conner's care, and they are concerned—and so am I—that this reckless, reprehensible bill will put them back to the place that they were when they first learned about Conner's diagnosis.

Should Conner's disease progress, he will very likely need access to Medicaid in order to offset the costs of living with a disability, but for his family, the question now is, Will Medicaid even be there? If that devastating day comes, will he continue to receive the care he needs?

Conner's family is not about to give up. They have come to my office annually since he was diagnosed in order to fight for a cure and to fight for the Affordable Care Act—sometimes with tears in their eyes. They raise awareness, and they fight for their little boy. I know they would do it a million times over again if it meant that Conner could get better and live a long and healthy life.

Conner and others like him are why I am here. Conner and others like him are why I will continue this fight against any attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with a shameful, disgraceful bill that has been written behind closed doors—destroying lives and degrading the quality of life for millions of Americans.

The people whom I have met in Connecticut who came to this hearing—and countless others who have talked to me about the Affordable Care Act—are fighting for their lives and their health and for others who need it as well.

Those people whom I met in Connecticut and the others who will come to our hearing on Friday and, perhaps, afterward are the reason I am fighting for better coverage for all of the people of Connecticut and our country.

Those people are the best of our country with their fighting spirit and dedication to the people they love, and they deserve to be heard. They are the voices and faces of the Affordable Care Act who have been turned away at the door of this Capitol. I refuse to allow them to be silenced.

As I have mentioned, we will be back at it again on Friday because hearing from our constituents is part of our job. It is the bedrock of democracy. It is the fundamental core of what we do—listening to the people whom we represent. Failing to do so is unconscionable just as destroying the Affordable Care Act would be unconscionable, just as denying Conner what he needs would be unconscionable, just as ignoring Justice and Sean and Frank would be unconscionable. I hope my colleagues will listen.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished President pro tempore of the Senate, the chairman of the committee. I am honored to take that 5 minutes.

VETERANS HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, a lot of us wake up in the morning with a plan for the day, and we know what we are going to do each hour—and every 5 minutes if you are a Member of the Senate. Some days surprise you. I went to breakfast this morning for Members of the Senate who are veterans of the U.S. military. There were three of us at that breakfast. There were supposed to be more, but some did not come at the last minute.

One of the people at the breakfast handed me a piece of paper—four pages as a matter of fact—and asked: Have you seen this?

I did not know what it was, but I turned and looked at it. It was a white paper on the impact of President Trump's proposed budget on the American veteran.

The guy said: You are the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. I want you to explain why all of this is true.

I quickly turned through it, from one page to another, and looked at each of the headlines and subtitles. Every one of them was wrong. There was not a statement of fact in it, but there was a purpose to the paper.

So I thought all morning about what I would do today to try and get the word out about what is true without getting into a partisan or a bickering battle on the floor of the Senate about documents that have been sent out circuitously by one Member of the Senate or another. Facts are facts, and facts are stubborn things. It is very important for me as chairman of the committee to make sure that the Members of the Senate know what we are dealing with as we lead up to making important decisions.

This white paper alleges that President Trump's budget is a circuitous route to privatize VA health services for our veterans, which is patently untrue and wrong, and the authors of this in the Senate who have written it know it is untrue because they are on the committee. It further alleges that the funding of healthcare for veterans has been cannibalized by privatization programs in order to take healthcare out of the Veterans Health Administration and put it into the private sector.

I know, within a few weeks, that I am going to be coming to the floor with, hopefully, the entire Veterans' Affairs Committee and will be seeking additional funds for the Choice Program so as to continue to meet the demand for our veterans and their healthcare.

It was 2½ years ago that this Senate and this Congress and the former President passed and signed legislation that guaranteed that every veteran, no matter where he lived, could get services

within the private sector in his community that were approved by the VA—services that he could not get from the VA anywhere. In other words, he got a choice. If he were denied an appointment within 30 days, he got a choice if he lived more than 40 miles from the service area. It became known as the Choice Program—popular but difficult to manage. It was popular in that 2.7 million appointments were held in the next 2 years over the previous 2 years because of the increased accessibility of healthcare for our veterans.

I come to the floor to say that the Veterans' Affairs Committee is working with the appropriators and the authorizers to see to it that the healthcare money that needs to be appropriated for our veterans is appropriately done in the budget proposal that we pass out of this body.

I want everybody on the floor to remember, every time you allege as a Member of the Senate that money for veterans is being cannibalized and that they are not going to get their health services, you are accusing the Congress and the Senate of not doing their constitutional duty of providing the funds we guarantee these men and these women when they voluntarily sign up to serve our country, serve for the eligible time necessary, and get VA status.

I am never going to forsake my obligation to the men and women who serve us today, have served us in the past, and will serve us in the future. I am never going to be one of those politicians who is not trustworthy in standing behind every promise that is made.

We have made a great promise to the veterans of America, and we are going to keep it because they made the greatest promise of all—that they would risk their lives for each of us.

So, if you get a document that reads "The Impact of President Trump's Proposed Budget on America's Veterans" and read it and it talks about the cannibalization of VA healthcare and its going to a privatized system of healthcare, put it in the trash can because that is where it belongs. It is full of quotes that have been taken out of context and that have been put together to tell a story to frighten folks.

Today and every day, we are in the process in the Veterans' Affairs Committee of working toward seeing to it that we meet the funding shortfalls that exist, to see to it that our veterans get the healthcare that they deserve and they come to our Veterans Health Administration for or that they have a choice, and we will continue to do so.

I have but one responsibility in the U.S. Senate, which is of paramount importance, and that is my chairmanship on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. I am not going to let our veterans down, and I am not going to let somebody else allege that we on the committee are trying to do something that would

not help the veterans or guarantee them their healthcare. On the contrary, we are going to see to it that nobody else takes it away. We are going to do for our veterans what they have done for us—pledge our sacred honor to see to it that they get the service they deserve, have fought for, and have risked their lives for.

I thank the Senator from Utah for yielding the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, for the last several weeks, I have been hearing quite a bit about process here in the Senate, particularly as it relates to the ongoing debate over the future of ObamaCare.

My friends on the other side of the aisle have, apparently, poll-tested the strategy of decrying the supposed secrecy surrounding the healthcare bill and the lack of regular order in its development. They have come to the floor, given interviews, and even hijacked committee meetings and hearings to express their supposedly righteous indignation about how Republicans are proceeding with the healthcare bill.

Of course, hearing Senate Democrats lecture about preserving the customs and traditions of the Senate is a bit ironic, but I will get back to that in a minute.

Last week, the Senate Finance Committee, which I chair, held a routine nominations markup to consider a slate of relatively uncontroversial nominees. On that same day, several of our colleagues and congressional staffers had been viciously attacked by an armed assailant, and a Member of the House of Representatives, of course, was in critical condition in the hospital.

I opened the meeting by respectfully asking my colleagues to allow the committee to use the markup as an opportunity to demonstrate unity in the face of a violent attack against Congress as an institution. Even then, my Democratic friends were, apparently, unable to pass up an opportunity to try to score partisan points and rack up video clips for social media by playing for the cameras as they lamented the committee's position in the healthcare debate.

Once again, the situation is dripping with irony. As I said, I will get to that in a minute.

If my Democratic colleagues are going to continue grandstanding over the healthcare debate, I have a few numbers I would like to cite for them.

Under ObamaCare, health insurance premiums in the State of Oregon have gone up by an average of 110 percent. In Michigan, they have gone up by 90 percent. In Florida, they have gone up by 84 percent. In Delaware, they have gone up by 108 percent. In Ohio, they have gone up by 86 percent. In Pennsylvania, they have gone up by 120 percent. In

Virginia, they have gone up by 77 percent. In Missouri, they have gone up by 145 percent.

I have not picked those States at random. Each of these States is currently represented by a Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee. Of course, those trends extend well beyond the committee.

In Illinois, where the Senate minority whip resides, premiums have gone up by 108 percent.

In West Virginia and Wisconsin, both of which are also represented by Democratic Senators, premiums have gone up by 169 percent and 93 percent, respectively.

Montana is in a similar situation with premiums rising by 133 percent under ObamaCare.

Now, just so people do not go thinking that I am picking on the Democrats, I will note that, in Utah, health insurance premiums have gone up by an average of 101 percent.

In Wyoming, they have gone up by 107 percent, and, in Nebraska, they have gone up by 153 percent.

I can go on, but I think my point is clear: Health insurance premiums have skyrocketed all over the country by an average of 105 percent. I will repeat that. Under ObamaCare, the average health insurance premiums in the United States have seen triple-digit increases.

These are the fruits of the so-called Affordable Care Act. This is the burden that ObamaCare has placed on patients and families throughout our country, and people are feeling that burden whether they vote for Democrats or Republicans.

The only difference is that, for 7½ years, my Republican colleagues and I have been talking about the failures of ObamaCare, and for 7½ years, Senate Democrats have done virtually nothing to address these problems.

For 7½ years, Republicans like myself have pleaded with our Democratic colleagues and with the previous administration to work with us to address the failures of ObamaCare, and for 7½ years, it has been virtually impossible to get any Democrat in Washington to even acknowledge that there have been any problems with ObamaCare to begin with.

As the cost of healthcare in this country has skyrocketed out of control and the system created by the so-called Affordable Care Act has been collapsing under its own weight, Democrats in the Senate have been cherry-picking what few positive data points they can find and telling the American people that everything is fine and that ObamaCare is working.

Give me a break.

By no honest or reasonable measure is ObamaCare living up to the promises that were made at the time it was passed. As a result, the American people are saddled with a healthcare system that has been poorly designed and recklessly implemented.

Sure, it has made for partisan political theater for my colleagues to ex-

press shock and dismay at the current state of the healthcare debate. I am quite certain the strategy has polluted very well among the Democratic base, and the Senate minority leader clearly has an elaborate media campaign in mind.

Before they begin berating Republicans, I hope my Democratic colleagues were able to come up with something to tell their constituents whose healthcare costs have exploded as a result of ObamaCare. I have just mentioned a few things.

I hope they have answers for their voters for wondering why they only have one insurance option available to them, if they even have that, and, most importantly, I hope they have an explanation as to why they have been more or less silent while the law they supported—and still support—has wreaked havoc on our Nation's healthcare system.

Until they can answer those questions and provide those explanations, my good friends should spare anyone within earshot their lectures about what is currently happening in the Senate.

Finally, let me address the irony of my Democratic colleagues' process complaints. Some of them have selective memories when it comes to the history of ObamaCare. We have heard our colleagues talk about the number of committee hearings held in advance of ObamaCare's passing. What we don't hear is that there was not a single hearing held in the Senate on the ObamaCare reconciliation bill, which was an essential element that ensured passage of the Affordable Care Act in the House.

We have heard our colleagues talk about the markup process in committee and the number of amendments that were filed and accepted. What we don't hear about is the fact that the bills reported by the Finance and HELP Committees were tossed aside so the healthcare bill could be rewritten behind closed doors in Senator Reid's office, who was then the majority leader. The final product was only made public a few days before the Senate voted on it.

The truth is this: Senate committees—including the Finance Committee—have had literally dozens of hearings wherein the failings of ObamaCare—both the structure of the law and its implementation—have been thoroughly examined. Between all the relevant committees, there have been at least 66 healthcare hearings in the Senate since ObamaCare became the healthcare law of the land. More than half of those were in the Finance Committee.

Committees have conducted countless oversight investigations and inquiries into these matters over the years. Few matters in the history of our country have received as much of the Senate's attention as ObamaCare has received. Very few laws have been examined as extensively as the so-

called Affordable Care Act, which is anything but affordable. ObamaCare is the very definition of well-covered territory.

The majority leader has made clear that Members will have an opportunity to examine the forthcoming healthcare bill, and I expect that to be the case. He has always made assurances that when the bill is debated on the floor, we will have a fair and open amendment process, as required under the rules. There is really no reason for anyone to expect otherwise.

Let's recall that when ObamaCare was passed, the Democratic Speaker of the House, with a plain face, stated that Congress had to pass the bill in order for people to see what was in it.

Let's also recall that a couple of years later, one of the chief architects of the so-called Affordable Care Act bragged about the lack of transparency that surrounded its passage and said it was necessary to, in his words, take advantage of the "stupidity of the American voter."

Any argument that the process that resulted in ObamaCare was a picture of transparency and deliberation is so off base that it would almost be humorous if the issue was something less important.

As I said in committee last week, I want to welcome my Democratic colleagues to the healthcare debate. Ever since ObamaCare was signed into law, Democrats have more or less assumed that the debate was over and that all they had to do was keep telling the American people that everything was just fine, as if repetition alone would make it come true.

Everyone is going to see the bill, and everyone is going to get their chance to say their piece about it.

For now, I simply hope my Democratic colleagues will spare us their lectures and maybe look in the mirror when they are ranting about the degradation of the process and traditions of the Senate.

I have been around healthcare for most of my 41 years in the Senate. A lot of the healthcare bills that work in this country have my name on them. This is one of the worst bills I have ever seen in all my time in the U.S. Senate. If I were a Democrat, I would not be claiming success because of that bill. It is a pathetic piece of legislation that is going to put this country down and make healthcare not available for everybody but make everybody have the worst healthcare system they could possibly have.

Now, it is one thing to cherry-pick a few things that the healthcare bill can help with, but it would be a totally stupid bill if it didn't have something in it that was good. If you look at the overall bill and you look at the overall cost to America and you look at what it is doing to America and you look at how the medical profession is starting to really wonder if they want to be in the profession anymore—you can't do all of this and look at all of these things

without asking, What in the heck have we done here? Are we so stupid that we believe the Federal Government is the last answer to everything?

Well, we will see, because I think some people are that stupid and, frankly—I don't want to name anybody, and I hope I am wrong, but I have been here 41 years and I have seen a lot of stupidity around this place and you have to really go a long way to find anything worse than the so-called "affordable" healthcare bill.

This is a pathetic piece of legislation that is going to wreck our country if we don't, as Democrats and Republicans, get together and reform it. This is an opportunity for my friends on the Democratic side as well as the Republican side to see what we can do about this and to get this thing straightened out.

This is the greatest country in the world. There is nobody in this country who should go without basic healthcare. When we have terrible cases like my distinguished friend and colleague from Connecticut has mentioned, yes, we want to make sure people who suffer like that are taken care of, and there are some on our side who could be a little more humane and compassionate, but there are some on the other side, too, who could be a little more humane and compassionate and maybe a little more honest when they talk about this bill.

We are a long way from solving the healthcare problems in this country, and if we go down this road any further, we will be an even longer way from solving these problems, and we may very well bankrupt the American economy, which will then really show us how bad we are with regard to healthcare in this country.

My friends on the other side never ask, Where is the money going to come from? Who is going to pay for this? Who is going to help us to get through this? We are just going to throw money at it, and we are \$100 trillion in unfunded liability in this country and \$20 trillion in national debt. It is astounding. Who is going to pay for it, especially when it doesn't work any better than that.

I spent some of my prior life in medical malpractice work defending doctors and hospitals and healthcare providers, and some of that was really astounding to me because some of those cases were brought just to get the defense costs, which were always pretty high because those cases were very expensive to defend. Most of them were not good cases, but once they got in court, if they had any kind of basis at all—but even if they were dismissed, it still cost a lot of money.

All I can say is, there is a lot wrong with our healthcare system in this country, but it is still the best healthcare system in the world, and it is about to go down if we don't get together as Republicans and Democrats and straighten this mess out. We can make our political points all we want

to. Both sides have been right in some cases and both sides have been wrong on some things, but we are wrong if we think that the current system is going to work, and we ought to be working together as Republicans and Democrats or Democrats and Republicans to straighten it out.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise with the understanding that the Senate will be voting on a Republican healthcare bill next week, a bill that has been written entirely behind closed doors.

The bill has been hidden from the American people, the press, and, as far as I can tell, almost every Senator. I have not been allowed to see it and neither have any of my Democratic colleagues.

I was elected to the Senate in 2014 during the same election that Republicans regained the majority, and I remember a pledge by their leadership that the Senate would return to regular order. Well, regular order means public hearings on legislation. Regular order means committees have a chance to gather input from expert witnesses, consider a policy's potential impact, and amend bills before they come to the floor.

Prior to enacting ObamaCare, the Senate Finance and HELP Committees held nearly 100 hearings, roundtables, and walkthroughs on healthcare reform. In the House, where I served at the time, there were over 79 bipartisan hearings and markups that included an opportunity for our Republican colleagues to offer input and amendments in the bill. Dozens of Republican amendments were adopted during the House committee markups of the Affordable Care Act. That is an open process.

What we are seeing now is a bill drafted entirely in secrecy and hidden behind closed doors. But why? Is it because Republicans know that this bill is not a good deal for the American people? You could call the recent process a lot of things, but you can't call it open, and you can't call it regular order.

Supposedly, the bill has been assembled by a working group of 13 of my Republican colleagues, but just yesterday—just yesterday—one of these Members complained that he had not yet seen a draft. In fact, he went on to say—this is a Republican colleague of mine in this working group:

It has become increasingly apparent in the last few days that even though we thought we were going to be in charge of writing a bill within this working group, it's not being written by us. It's apparently being written by a small handful of staffers for members of the Republican leadership in the Senate.

This quote makes it clear that this working group is—well, it is not working.

When Senators in the majority party are unable to tell you who is writing

the bill, let alone what is in the bill, we have a problem. While we clearly have a problem with the secretive, rushed process, this process is a symptom, not the disease. The underlying disease is that this bill, which we reportedly will see tomorrow, is almost certainly terrible for the American people.

There are two explanations for keeping a product under wraps: Either you want to build excitement for it or you are worried about the weaknesses that would be exposed by the daylight. I don't believe for a moment that Republicans are trying to build excitement by hiding this bill. This bill is not next year's model of the Ford Mustang or Chevy Camaro waiting to be unveiled at the Detroit auto show to great fanfare. This bill is like a disaster that will negatively impact millions of Americans. This bill is the iceberg that sunk the *Titanic*, and Republican leadership has turned off the ship's radio and are furiously shoveling coal into the engines.

While the Senate moves full steam ahead to vote next week on a bill we haven't even seen yet, I am worried that my colleagues across the aisle, along with too many political commentators and pundits, are simply asking the wrong questions. They are asking: Will moderate Republicans vote for it? Will the tea party wing support it? Will it take sweetheart deals to get to 51 votes?

Well, folks, this is not a game. This is not about if and how the majority can count to 51 votes and solve their political problems with the far-right-wing base of their party. This is about people's lives.

There are serious policy questions we need to ask, and the American people deserve to have answers. There are questions like these: What are your policy goals here? How do you think this will help people afford quality insurance coverage? What will the bill do for tens of millions of Americans who have gained healthcare coverage in recent years? What will the bill do for patients with preexisting conditions? What will the bill do for the hundreds of thousands of Michiganders covered under the successful Healthy Michigan Program? What will the bill do for small business owners and employees? What will the bill do for seniors who need affordable, long-term care options? What will the bill do for individuals battling opioid addiction? These are questions I am asking, along with all of my Democratic colleagues.

I serve on the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and just a few weeks ago we held a hearing on opioid abuse and how the epidemic is simply ravaging our Nation.

I had the opportunity to speak with a police chief from our southern border State of Ohio. He was very clear that if Medicaid expansion were to go away—as we saw in the House bill and expect to see in the Senate bill—it will make it much more difficult for local police departments to tackle this crisis because of dramatically scaled-back

availability of addiction treatment. I spoke with a coroner, a medical doctor, and an addiction expert on the panel as well.

These are professionals dealing with a public health crisis each and every day—not people with political agendas. They all agreed that Medicaid expansion is critical to combating addiction, improving public health, and helping individuals suffering from addiction have an opportunity to be productive citizens and have a second chance at life.

The bottom line is that this bill—this secretive, rushed bill that we will supposedly see tomorrow—will move us backward and rip healthcare away from millions of Americans. When you take health coverage away from people, people will die.

As a Member of the House, I voted for the Affordable Care Act because I knew that, at the end of the day, it would save people's lives. As elected officials and public servants, there are only a handful of votes we cast that are literally about life and death. Next week, we will see one of those votes.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to read the bill, whenever we get it, and then talk to doctors, patients, families, clinics, and hospitals in their State. I also urge my colleagues to vote no next week and to start a truly bipartisan process that keeps what works, fixes what doesn't, but, most importantly, helps all Americans afford quality healthcare in their communities.

I stand here ready and willing to be a partner in a bipartisan process and to work with my Republican colleagues to improve our healthcare system. Show us and the American people you are serious about health reform. Let's have an open and honest process and pass a bill that is genuinely in the best interest of the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The clerk will call the roll. The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I come weekly to the Senate whenever we are in session to give my "Time to Wake Up" speech, talking about climate change and, quite often, talking about the climate denial campaign that prevents us from taking action and, quite often, talking about the campaign finance problems in our country that make climate denial effective. Here, in Congress, it is not hard to connect the dots from campaign finance to climate denial.

The Supreme Court's Republican majority's disastrous Citizens United decision was requested by the fossil fuel industry, and the fossil fuel industry took instant advantage of it—almost

like they saw it coming. The industry and its front groups instantly used their new power conferred by Citizens United to come after politicians—Republicans in particular. Ask Bob Inglis, who backed responsible climate policies. Citizens United created new American dark-money emperors, and—no surprise—the new emperors love their new political power.

Their first payoff was that Republicans in Congress fled from any legislative action on climate change. Before Citizens United, there were multiple bipartisan climate bills. Year after year—when I was here in 2007, 2008, 2009—there were bipartisan climate bills to the left of you, bipartisan climate bills to the right of you, bipartisan climate bills cropping up all over. Today, we watch our Republican President trying to undo curbs on carbon emissions and, to the cheers of Republicans in Congress, withdrawing the United States from the historic Paris Agreement. We join Syria and Nicaragua as the only nations to reject this common cause. That, my friends, is the heavy hand of fossil fuel influence, driving us into isolation and abdication of American leadership.

Of course, right now, no Republican can safely sponsor any bill to limit carbon dioxide emissions, and so none do. Very different than before the Citizens United decision in January of 2010. That changed everything. When those five Republican justices opened up unlimited political spending to the big Republican special interests, that unlimited political spending was inevitably going to find dark-money channels. Dark-money channels hide the identity of the political donor, so that big special interests can pollute our politics with their money with seemingly clean hands.

The climate denial scheme of the fossil fuel cartel is powered politically by dark money. Whether through the lure of dark money coming in for you in a political race or the threat of dark money coming in against you in a political race, dark money powers climate denial. Well, we have just learned something new about dark money.

Chairman GRAHAM and I held hearings in our Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism to look at Russian interference in the recent 2016 election and what it portends for elections to come. Our witnesses warned us that Russia has strategically manipulated politics in Europe for decades. They started working in the former Soviet Union countries, and they expanded to where they are manipulating politics in France, Germany, Holland, England, and all over Europe. The witnesses warned us that we in America must be prepared for that. They jumped the Atlantic to manipulate the 2016 elections, and they are not going away.

One identified weakness of the United States against Russian influence was this dark money in our politics. Why is that? Well, it is obvious.

Once you allow dark money in, dark is dark. Cash from Vladimir Putin is no more traceable than cash from Charles and David Koch. One witness, a former Republican national security official, told us: "It is critical that we effectively enforce the campaign finance laws that would prevent this type of financial influence by foreign actors."

"It is critical that we effectively enforce the campaign finance laws" against foreign influence by foreign actors.

The two best studies of Russian influence in Western Europe in their elections and in their politics are "The Kremlin Playbook," by CSIS, or the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and "The Kremlin's Trojan Horses," by the Atlantic Council. Both of them report that Russia takes advantage of nontransparency in campaign financing to build its shadowy webs of influence and control. If you leave dark-money channels lying around, it is likely that Vladimir Putin and his oligarchs will find them.

The "Trojan Horses" report warns this: "The Kremlin's blatant attempts to influence and disrupt the U.S. presidential election should serve as an inspiration for a democratic push back." That is a lower case "d" for "democratic push back," and it points to one key way we need to push back.

I will quote them again.

Electoral rules should be amended, so that publically funded political groups, primarily political parties, should at the very least be required to report their sources of funding.

That is, end dark money.

Likewise, the "Kremlin Playbook" report warns:

Enhancing transparency and the effectiveness of the Western democratic tools, instruments, and institutions is critical to resilience against Russian influence.

Enhancing transparency means ending dark money.

Our hearing and these reports reveal another political influence tool used by the Kremlin: fake news. As we shore up our democracy to defend against Russia's fake news information warfare, we must remember this: Climate denial was the original fake news.

To give an example, here is a story that may sound familiar. An unknown hacker illegally breaks into and steals an organization's emails. The organization's emails are held until they can be released at a politically strategic moment. At the strategic moment, emails are leaked to a website with shady ties. The leaks are then amplified and spun by fake news, driven into the regular media, and have their desired political effect. Does any of that sound familiar? Of course, it is the methodology of the Russians' hack of the Democratic National Committee, right? Unknown hacker, stolen emails, strategic release, caching them until they can be used, shady website, fake news spin-up, regular media takes the bait, political damage.

If you step back and look at just the methodology, we have seen this pattern before—so-called climategate, the

fake scandal years ago cooked up by the climate denial machine. It was 2009, not 2017. The organization hacked was not the DNC but the Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom. The release was timed to the U.N. climate conference in Copenhagen, not the Presidential election. The documents went to climate skeptic blogs—with, interestingly, the first upload in Russia—instead of to WikiLeaks, but the mainstream media took the bait, and the political damage was done.

At the time, the New York Times wrote:

The[se] revelations are bound to inflame the public debate as hundreds of negotiators prepare to negotiate an international climate accord at meetings in Copenhagen next month.

This climategate scheme worked so well that in November 2011, the climategate operation did it again just before the U.N. climate conference in Durban in what was dubbed climategate 2.0. Of course, the whipped-up climategate hysteria was all fake news.

As the Guardian wrote in February 2010:

Almost all the media and political discussion about the hacked climate emails has been based on soundbites publicised by professional [climate] sceptics and their blogs. In many cases, these have been taken out of context and twisted to mean something they were never intended to.

Eight times, everyone from the inspector general of the U.S. Department of Commerce, to the National Science Foundation, to the British Parliament found no evidence of any misconduct by the scientists, but for the climate denier groups, the truth was never the point.

This climategate stunt was the product of a fake news infrastructure built by the fossil fuel industry to attack and undermine real climate science—disinformation campaigns, false-front organizations, stables of paid-for scientists, and propaganda honed by public relations experts. This denial operation aspires to mimic and rival real science, and it is an industrial-strength adversary with big advantages. It does not need to win its disputes with real science; it just needs to create the public illusion of a real dispute. It doesn't have to waste time in peer review, and it doesn't have to be true; it just has to sound like it might be. This industrial fake news operation isn't going anywhere. It is too valuable to the big polluters.

As we prepare to face down Russia's campaign of election interference, we will have to face up to these two hard facts:

If the Kremlin wants to deploy fake news information warfare in our country, the climate denial fake news infrastructure already exists. Remember, climate denial was the original fake news.

If the Kremlin wants to deploy a surreptitious financial influence cam-

paign, the dark money infrastructure already exists. The fossil fuel industry's dark money election manipulation machinery is ready to go. Putin doesn't have to build a thing. The fossil fuel dark money and fake news infrastructure stands ready to go.

Unfortunately, we know it works because it has worked for years for the fossil fuel cartel, particularly since Citizens United allowed the fossil fuel industry to enforce silence on the Republican Party.

The dangers of fake news, dark money, climate denial, and foreign interference in our elections are all intermixed. They have brought us to the point where the President of the United States will leave the Paris Agreement, betraying the country's interests, in the service of the fossil fuel industry, the Koch brothers' climate denial operation, and Breitbart fake news.

This calls for an American response. Dark money and fake news are a sinister combination, whoever is behind them. America must address the twin threats of fake news and dark money. It is bad enough when these are the tools of the fossil fuel industry's climate denial operation, but we are on notice now. We are on notice from these reports and from multiple witnesses that the Kremlin can borrow these tools too.

I will close by asking that we clean up this mess. It may take citizen action, given the stranglehold dark money and fake news have on Congress, but this is a fight worth having. There is no good that comes out of dark money and fake news, whoever is behind them. We should rid ourselves of this sinister combination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

REMEMBERING OTTO WARMBIER

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a promising young man from Wyoming, OH—just outside of Cincinnati, my hometown—a young man whose life was drastically cut short at just 22 years of age. I rise to talk about Otto Warmbier.

Otto had all the smarts and talent you could ever ask for. He was a homecoming king and the salutatorian of the Wyoming High School class he graduated from a few years ago. He spent a summer at the London School of Economics. He was a smart kid. He won a prestigious scholarship to study at the University of Virginia. As everyone expected he would, he excelled at UVA. He got great grades. He had a thirst for learning. He loved meeting new people and hearing about their lives and their perspectives. His future was as bright as it could possibly be.

It was this smart, kindhearted young man—a college kid—who was taken prisoner by the North Korean regime for nearly 18 months. Otto's detainment and sentence were unnecessary and appalling. Neither one should have ever happened in the first place. At

some point soon after being sentenced to 15 years of hard labor, from what we know, Otto suffered a severe brain injury—from what, we don't know, and we may never know.

Whom did the North Korean Government tell about this? No one. For the next 15 months or so, they kept this a secret. They denied him access to the best medical care he deserved, and they refused repeated requests for consular access that would normally be provided to those who have been detained—requests from our government, from the Obama administration, from the Trump administration, requests from the Red Cross, requests from the Swedish Government, which provides consular service for Americans in North Korea, requests from many of us here in the Capitol.

The regime unjustly imprisoned him and then lied about his severe medical condition. By the way, they continued to tell stories that make no sense. Doctors at the University of Cincinnati—some of the best doctors in the world and just the type of medical professionals Otto should have been able to see from the start—say that North Korea's claims as to what happened simply don't stand up to the evidence.

They called him a prisoner of war, but they also violated the Geneva Convention. For North Korea to imprison Otto Warmbier with no consular access for more than a year with his medical condition and severe brain injury—it goes well beyond that. It demonstrates a complete failure to recognize fundamental human rights. Because of these actions by the North Koreans, Otto is dead. His promise has been cut short.

If there is ever any doubt about the nature of the North Korean regime—that pariah country—then Otto's case should erase all doubt. We know this regime has no regard for the rule of law or the freedoms we enjoy here, but they also have no regard for basic human rights and dignity. They have subjected hundreds of thousands of their own people to mistreatment, torture, and death for decades. They are now extending that treatment to innocent Americans. North Korea should be universally condemned for its abhorrent behavior and be held accountable for its actions.

Otto's family—God bless them—tried everything they could to bring Otto home. For 18 months—and for almost 16 months not knowing of his dire condition—they were steadfast and resilient, trying everything they could.

I was there with Fred and Cindy Warmbier when Otto finally returned from North Korea. He came home. It was incredibly emotional to watch Otto be reunited with his loving family. I believe he knew he was back home. I believe he knew he was among those who loved him.

I want to thank State Department Special Representative Joe Yun, Deputy Secretary Sullivan, and Secretary Tillerson for their work to help secure Otto's release last week and to bring him home.

There are still three Americans who are being detained by the North Koreans. They should be released immediately, and we should do everything we can do as a country to secure their release.

Otto's case is a reminder that we must, on the one hand, increase pressure on North Korea to force them to change. There will soon be more to discuss on that. At the same time, we have to maintain an open line of communication to deal with the deadly serious issues we face. Those are some of the lessons I have taken from the last 18 months.

Fred, Cindy, and the entire Warmbier family have been incredibly strong through this ordeal. No one should have to go through what that family has experienced. My wife Jane and I will continue to be at their side, including at the funeral service tomorrow in Wyoming, OH.

I urge my colleagues and everybody listening at home to continue to hold up this family in prayer, but also let's ensure that this tragedy is a wake-up call about the true nature of this brutal regime.

Mr. President, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, President Trump said last week that the healthcare bill passed by the House was "mean," and then he said the Senate should make the bill more "generous, kind [and] with heart." It sounds like the President is having second thoughts about this Republican bill.

So now, Mr. President, you are waking up and noticing just how heartless this bill is; you know, the bill your Republican buddies in Congress slapped together in a back room; you know, the one you celebrated with a big press conference in the Rose Garden a few weeks ago; you know, the bill that you and House Republicans gave each other high fives over for taking away healthcare from millions of people, and now it sounds like you want a do-over.

Too bad no one explained to the President that mean is just part of the deal the Republicans have struck. Mean is baked into every sentence of this bill. When you set out to trade health insurance of millions of American families for massive tax cuts for the wealthy, things get real mean fast.

This mean bill does a lot of things, but some of the meanest things about it are how hard it will hit American women. To pay for the hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts for this bill, Republicans chose to make one of their classic moves—a sort of old reliable for Republican men: attack women's healthcare.

Let's run through just a few examples. Today, most people helped by Medicaid are women. The Republican bill cuts Medicaid by \$834 billion. Republicans say millions of women who lose healthcare will do just fine.

Today, plans on the individual market have to cover maternity care and

treatment for postpartum depression. The Republican bill says: Forget it. Let the States drop those benefits. Women are the only ones using them anyway.

Today, the law says you can't charge women more by labeling things like pregnancy as preexisting conditions. The Republican bill says: Who cares? Go for it.

Today, women can choose healthcare providers they trust the most, but the Republicans want to eliminate that choice by cutting funding for Planned Parenthood. Republicans say women can do just fine without the care they need.

Frankly, I am sick of many coming down to the Senate floor to explain to Republicans what Planned Parenthood does. I am sick of explaining that it provides millions of women with birth control, cancer screenings, and STI tests every year. I am sick of pointing out, again and again, that Federal dollars do not fund abortion services at Planned Parenthood or anywhere else. Women come to the floor, we explain, we cite facts, but Republicans would rather base healthcare policy on politics than on facts.

Speaker RYAN called this mean bill pro-life, but this is just the biggest political play of all. Calling something pro-life will not keep women from dying in back-alley abortions. It will not help women pay for the cancer screenings that could save their lives. It will not help them take care of their families, have safe sex, or afford their medical bills. The pro-life label is the Republicans playing politics with women's lives.

Let's be blunt. The Republican bill will make it more likely—not less likely—that women and their children will die. Women aren't fools. We can feel the difference. We can tell the difference between reality and lies, and that is why we are here today. That is why we are fighting back on the Senate floor today.

Right now, 13 Senators—all men—are sitting in a room writing revisions to the secret Republican bill. These 13 men will not show us the bill and will not hold hearings on its contents. Just in case anyone missed the point, please note that all 13 of these men have already voted during their time in the Senate to reduce women's access to contraception and abortion. Republicans have told the press that Americans shouldn't worry about the fact that women are shut out because "reduc[ing]" the 13 men to their gender is a "game . . . of identity politics."

This is not identity politics, and it is certainly not a game. This bill will affect every woman in this country, and we know what is going on behind closed doors: 13 men are trading away women's healthcare for tax cuts for the rich.

American women deserve better than this mean Republican bill, and American women are here to fight back.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak 5 minutes before the vote.

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

NOMINATION OF MARSHALL BILLINGSLEA

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise in support of Mr. Marshall Billingslea, who has been nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorist Financing.

Mr. Billingslea proved at his nomination hearing before the Banking Committee that he is exceptionally qualified for this job. As Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, Mr. Billingslea would be in charge of coordinating Treasury's efforts on terrorist financing, anti-money laundering, and other illicit financial threats to the domestic and international financial system.

Mr. Billingslea would work with the entire national security and law enforcement communities, the private sector, foreign governments, and other entities to carry out this mission.

As demonstrated at his confirmation hearing, his unique background includes 22 years of experience working with these entities to protect the Nation, and it also includes time in the legislative and executive branches, as well as the private sector. After 9/11, Mr. Billingslea served in senior positions in the Department of Defense and NATO. Prior to that, he worked on national security affairs at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where he drafted numerous pieces of sections of legislation intended to combat weapons of mass destruction and disrupt terrorist networks.

Mr. Billingslea's qualifications and capabilities were affirmed when he received bipartisan support from the Banking Committee in a 19-to-4 vote.

Before we proceed to the cloture vote on Mr. Billingslea, we will have a final vote on Ms. Sigal Mandelker's nomination to be Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Crimes, which I spoke about yesterday.

These two positions are critically important to defending our Nation from threats and securing our interests. As Assistant Secretary, Mr. Billingslea would work closely with Ms. Mandelker as head of the policy and outreach apparatus for the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, which Ms. Mandelker would lead.

As we saw with the Senate passage of the Iran sanctions bill and our Russia sanctions amendment last week, there is strong bipartisan support in Congress to remain strong against these Nations. As with the passage of that bill, I urge my colleagues to confirm Ms. Mandelker and to move forward with Mr. Billingslea's nomination so they can carry out the important work for which we have already shown such strong bipartisan support.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will

the Senate advise and consent to the Mandelker nomination?

Mr. STRANGE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 150 Ex.]

YEAS—96

Alexander	Flake	Murray
Baldwin	Franken	Nelson
Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Bennet	Graham	Perdue
Blumenthal	Grassley	Peters
Blunt	Hassan	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Reed
Brown	Heinrich	Risch
Burr	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cantwell	Heller	Rounds
Capito	Hirono	Rubio
Cardin	Hoeven	Sanders
Carper	Inhofe	Sasse
Casey	Isakson	Schatz
Cassidy	Johnson	Schumer
Cochran	Kaine	Scott
Collins	Kennedy	Shaheen
Coons	King	Shelby
Corker	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cornyn	Lankford	Strange
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Tester
Crapo	Manchin	Thune
Cruz	Markey	Tillis
Daines	McCain	Toomey
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall
Duckworth	McConnell	Van Hollen
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Enzi	Merkley	Whitehouse
Ernst	Moran	Wicker
Feinstein	Murkowski	Wyden
Fischer	Murphy	Young

NAYS—4

Booker	Harris
Gillibrand	Warren

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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 nomination of Marshall Billingslea, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, Department of the Treasury.

Mitch McConnell, Orrin Hatch, John Hoeven, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, John Boozman, Mike Rounds, Chuck Grassley, Steve Daines, Thom Tillis, John Thune, Mike Crapo, Bill Cassidy, James Inhofe, Thad Cochran, Tom Cotton, Roger Wicker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Marshall Billingslea, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, Department of the Treasury, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 65, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 151 Ex.]

YEAS—65

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Baldwin	Fischer	Nelson
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cardin	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Schatz
Collins	Isakson	Schumer
Coons	Johnson	Scott
Corker	Kaine	Shaheen
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shelby
Cotton	King	Strange
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Lee	Tester
Daines	Manchin	Thune
Donnelly	McCaskill	Tillis
Duckworth	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Warner

NAYS—34

Blumenthal	Hassan	Sanders
Booker	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Markey	Stabenow
Casey	McCain	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Franken	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	
Harris	Reed	

NOT VOTING—1

Leahy

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 65, the nays are 34.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Marshall Billingslea, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, Department of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

FREE SPEECH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to touch on a topic that, as I announced recently, I am going to continue to speak about in the coming weeks and months on the Senate floor; that is, the right of free speech.

This fundamental right is one of our most cherished. It forms the beating heart of our democracy. It sits at the core of our civic identity. Yet, these days, it seems to be coming under an increasing threat all across our country.

The challenges it faces are different from what we have seen in the recent past, but we must confront these, too, if we are to preserve this right for future generations. That is certainly what I intend to do. I know others share that commitment, and I hope more colleagues will join in this effort as well.

Our colleagues know this is a topic I have devoted a large part of my career to. Throughout the Obama years, I warned that our ability to freely engage in civic life and organize in defense of our beliefs was under coordinated assault from an administration that appeared determined to shut up anyone—anyone—who challenged it. These efforts to suppress speech were well documented, they extended throughout the Federal Government, and they were often aided by the Obama administration's allies here in Congress.

There were threats before then as well. I know, because I took up the fight against many of them. Sometimes it was a lonely battle. Often it was an unpopular one, but, in my view, it was necessary because whether the threats to free speech came from the IRS or the Obama administration's SEC, they shared a similar goal: to shut down or scare off the stage those who chose to think differently.

Today, however, the threat to free speech is evolving. The speech suppression crowd may no longer control the levers of Federal power, but it hasn't given up its commitment to silencing those with an opposing view.

Yesterday, in the Judiciary Committee, Chairman GRASSLEY held a hearing to explore the worsening problem of a lack of tolerance on college campuses—imagine that, college campuses of all places—for the views of others—lack of tolerance on college campuses for the views of others. One of the witnesses at the hearing was Floyd Abrams, whom our former colleague Senator Moynihan rightly described as “the most significant First Amendment lawyer of our age.” Mr. Abrams noted that we are witnessing “an extraordinary perilous moment with respect to free speech on campuses” where “too many students . . . seem to want to see and hear only views they already hold. And to prevent others from hearing views with which they differ.”

So what could account for this?

A profound lack of information is one answer. For example, Mr. Abrams cites a study where “nearly a third of college students could not even identify the First Amendment as the one that deals with freedom of speech.”

The day before, across the street, the Supreme Court reminded us of the importance of a vibrant right to free

speech, where its exercise does not depend upon the sufferance of the government.

In striking down the disparagement clause of Federal trademark law, the Court reminded us of what too many of those on college campuses appear not to have learned, and too many others seem to have forgotten: “Speech may not be banned on the ground that it expresses ideas that offend.” “Speech may not be banned on the ground that it expresses ideas that offend.”

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education estimates there were 43 reported instances of revoked speaking invitations or similar efforts to block speakers on campuses just last year. That is double the number recorded the previous year. It is more than 700 percent higher than the six incidents recorded back in 2000.

The trend is getting worse, not simply in terms of the overall number of incidents but—more worryingly—in terms of the growing aggressiveness of those efforts. This year alone, there have been multiple instances of intimidation, violence, and rioting at universities across the country.

There has been nasty and thuggish behavior aimed at suppressing speech. Sadly, it has often succeeded.

As USA TODAY put it in a recent editorial:

In just the place where the clash of ideas is most valuable, students are shutting themselves off to points of view they don't agree with. At the moment when young minds are supposed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of arguments, they are answering challenges to their beliefs with anger and violence instead of facts and reason.

This should worry all of us, regardless of party, regardless of ideology.

Hearing criticisms of one's beliefs and learning the beliefs of others is simply training for life in a democratic society. It doesn't mean one has to agree with those opinions, but no one is served by trapping oneself and others in cocoons of ignorance. That is hardly the recipe for a free and informed society.

To quote Frederick Douglass, “To suppress free speech is a double wrong [because] it violates the rights of the hearer as well as those of the speaker.”

Just as it was not right during the Obama years for Americans to endure harassment or incur crippling expenses because the government didn't like what they believed, it certainly is not right today for Americans to live in the shadow of fear simply because they dare to speak up or think differently or support a candidate or a cause that the speech suppression crowd may disagree with.

It really doesn't matter who you are or whether what you are saying is popular. These rights do not exist to protect what is popular; they exist precisely to protect what isn't.

That is one reason I have long opposed ideas like the flag-burning constitutional amendment. That doesn't mean I agree the flag should be burned.

Of course, I don't. I disagree strongly, but it is the principle that matters because the moment we allow ourselves to believe that some people stand outside the free speech protections of the First Amendment, then we are all in trouble—all of us.

The growing trend of intolerance we are seeing has taken many forms lately, but the underlying hostility to free speech has not changed. As I noted earlier, in recent years, the threat had often come from the Federal Government. These days, the threat tends to come from different quarters. There have been many high-profile incidents of speech suppression and violence at universities across the country, in particular, but it would be a mistake to think this problem is isolated to college campuses.

The bottom line, for me, is this: We simply cannot allow this trend of violence and intimidation to become the new normal in our country. This is a really serious problem that deserves serious attention. The solutions will not come simply. They will not be found in a single piece of legislation.

As President Reagan famously put it, “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it on to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on to them to do the same.”

That is what we are called upon to do again now—to inform, to engage, to empower; in the end, to inspire a new generation to defend a fundamental right for future generations, just as past generations did for us.

That is what I aim to do by continuing this dialogue on the Senate floor. From this platform, I will continue to raise the importance of free speech, outline the threats it faces, and do what I can to inform and encourage Americans to rally in its defense.

Others are using their platforms to advance similar goals, as Chairman GRASSLEY did yesterday. I hope more will join as this discussion continues because free speech is crucial to who we are as Americans, regardless of party, and we owe it to future generations to do what we can today to defend it.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO RECIPIENTS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate this year's winners of the Congressional

Award. Established by Congress in 1979, the award recognizes the achievements of young Americans between the ages of 14 and 23 years old. It celebrates their accomplishment in four program areas: voluntary public service, personal development, physical fitness, and expedition/exploration.

The Award challenges participants to set goals in an area that interests them. If they successfully achieve their goals, they earn bronze, silver, and gold certificates and medals. Through the program, these young Americans gain new skills, earn greater confidence, and position themselves to be productive citizens.

Each year in June, these young people are presented their Congressional Awards at a ceremony here in our Nation's Capital. On behalf of the U.S. Senate, I would like to congratulate all of the winners for their accomplishments and for the example they set for others. Among this impressive group, my State of Kentucky is home to five medalists. Through their efforts, the recipients of the 2017 Congressional Awards are strengthening their communities and our Nation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a list of this year's recipients of the Congressional Award be printed in the RECORD.

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

Alabama: Madison Haney.

Arizona: Piyaporn Chivatapanorn, Ayesha Ahsan, Jacob Cryder, Emily Hartzler, Jacob Matsumoto.

California: Alannah Ruiz, Edward Jung, Nathaniel Chien, Katie Wong, Abhiraj Chowdhury, Hannah Lee, Conrad Chu, Riya Dholia, Ethan Teo, Kai Fisher, Megan Pollon, Minkyong Cho, Michael Ngan, Reed Fundter, Hee Won Jung, Suzie Kim, Yoojin Kim, Jonathan Liu, William Choi, Naomi Kim, Austin Noll, Daniel Hong, YuYing Dai, Steven Gi, Hyeun Lee, Kayla Samini, Alexander Kang, Tiffany Kim, Lina Kim, Pranit Kumaran, Danielle Lee, Jihyun Woo, Sung Ho Woo, Jung Hyo Baik, Snghyun Byon, Gordon Chan, David Huh, Jordan Jennison, Beom Kim, Katherine Kim, Ha Young Kong, Brandon Lee, Connie Lee, Eric Lee, Harris Liou, Hasan Liou, Jacob Nam, Daniel Jewon Choi, Dean Colarossi, Connor Fiddler, Emily Ha, Jeimin Ha, Sonia Kim, Yena Kim, Alice Lee, Tyler Nguyen, Peter Stewart, Jennifer Yi, Yan Zhang, Hee Won Jung, Jamie Ostmann, Janice Park, Katrina Chan, Jaeyub Chung, Alexander Scott, David Bao, Jake Leung, Lauren Rennecker, Naomi Kim.

Colorado: Edwin Bodoni, Spencer Christensen.

Connecticut: Rachel Goldstein, Sydney Tabor, Ann Wechsler, Christian Yon.

Delaware: Kayleigh Barnes, Micah Petersen.

Florida: John Finelli, Jean-Paul Recht, Joshua Florkowski, Ronald Florkowski, Amir Kamrani, Alexis Behne Sharma, Julie Bicknell, Stephanie Brookshire, Christian Cropp, James Dowling, Nicole Ferruggia, Reece Haire, Caitlin Hiscock, Garrett Holmes, Aalisha Jaisinghani, Rachel Maunus, Jack McGinley, Ben Meyerson, Olivia Perez, Sofia Perez, Diana Pinkham, Cameron Pirozzi, Jonathan Prokos, Shelby Russo, Brianna Steidle, Sabrina Uvanely, Cali Vaughn, Jesse Katzeff, Brendan Shipley, Jillian Hanley, Srijiith Nair, Colleen Murray, Sofia Santa-Cruz.

Georgia: Margaret Silliman, Rachael Liu, Christina Dalton.

Idaho: Samuel Cuentas, Rebecca Levi, Christiana Stone, Jesse Cole, Annabelle Day, Solveig Norton.

Illinois: Natalia Czachorowski, Mary Kuprianczyk, Samia Abdul-Qadir, Adam Koszyk, Jason Yang, Clayton Pope, DeAnna Pope.

Indiana: Lauren Ciulla, Matthew Frye, Emily Huff.

Iowa: Susan Alverio.

Kansas: Vasavi Garimella, Jared Gillen, Arjun Mahajan, Ryan Mohamadi, Katherine Walsworth, Irfan Ansari.

Kentucky: Katherine Speece, John Garland, Zachariah Kiser, Mackenzie Rigney, Kayla Sears.

Louisiana: Sean Thomas.

Maryland: Hansel Motiram, Ryan Briscoe, Madeline Carwile, Lucy Lee, WeiAnne Reidy, Alix MacKillop, Clara da Silva, Nikhil Swaminathan.

Massachusetts: Mikayla Steele, Alexandra Duplin, Ishan Shukla, Harrison Theodore, Maria Theodore.

Michigan: Emily Deese, Jeremy Tang, Emma Hicks, Sara Trojanowski, Emily Prokop, Thomas Libcke.

Minnesota: Emily Baer, Matthew Baer, Braden O'Connor, Payton Puerzer.

Mississippi: Lane Mitchell, Abby Pitts, Mamie Albritton.

Missouri: Olivia Hoijarvi, Allison Licavoli, Natalie Dameron.

Nebraska: Luis Sanchez-Romo, John Paul Terneus, Terese Navarra, Ethan Nelson.

Nevada: David Tegtmeier, Sara Tegtmeier, Neha Zafar, Taimur Khalid.

New Jersey: Satchel Bell, Funda Akilli, David Crain III, Michael Doliszny, Madison Gandy, Marta Majewski, Amanda Olivio, Urvi Patel, Anthony Uzzolina, Andrew Laberee, Dominic Esposito, Christopher Lauria, Mitchell Lauria, Maya Ravichandran, Allison Wetherell, Erica Wu, Rahul Yerrabelli, Nicholas Coleburn, Ryan Robert Murphy, Vaed Prasad, Felicia Aschettino, Madilyn Somers, Lindsay Fogel, Aaura Herbertson, Thiago Santos, Elena Boal, Priya Vulchi.

New York: Heejin Han, Christopher Kim, Naome Sajmani, Genevieve Bruen, Edward McCabe, Santo Tiralosi, Mahika Had, Fiona Dubrosa, William Gregson, Allison Herskovitz, Zachary Kunow, Kathleen Schofield, Lucas Zhao, Charles Siragusa, Gabriel Curcione.

North Carolina: Holly Hutcheson, Jacob Rowe, Emma Morris, Thomas Douglas, Capri D'Souza, Caroline Fitzgerald, Lauraleigh Guthrie, Jack Maginnes, Delaney Dunlap, Jenna Viveiros, Bennett David, Ashley Jamison, Kathryn Ellis, Jordan Feldman, Lawton Gresham.

Ohio: Natalie Carter, Ellen Haney, Pakrush Katragadda, Katherine Skelly, Max Lee, Hannah Addington, Arihant Chordia, Vidur Prasad, Sanjana Yerubandi, Laurel Grae, Jaidev Sharma, Alan Ai, Dusstyn Reynolds.

Oklahoma: Luisamaria Rubio.

Oregon: Kendall Fleshman, Megan Baumhardt.

Pennsylvania: Nisha Arya, Joshita Varshney, Elizabeth Belka, Victoria Belka, Noah Berkowitz, Seth Berkowitz, Lindsay Fullerton, Samantha Gable, Jasna Janikic, Erin Markham, Emily Matthews, Swathi Prakash, Anthony Radcliffe, Kristen Sparhawk, Stephanie Waldstein, Indra Alagar, Jaya Alagar, Krishnan Alagar, Rajan Alagar, Sarah Laible, Teja Polisetty.

Rhode Island: Aidan Sowa, Ryan Sowa.

South Carolina: Maggie Bowyer, Mary Grace Shannon, Jeremy Ward.

Tennessee: Evan Ladd, Carmen Ross, Grant Gammon.

Texas: Chelsea Parrott, Briana Gonzalez, Ruveyda Karaca, Almaas Khan, Gopal Raman, Monica Attaway, Edward Cen, Adam Hoffman, BJ Kim, Animate Mazurek, Miki Somosot, Srikar Anantha, Tejna Dasari, Ashish Dave, Shrey Derasari, Siri Jois, Emily Jue, Eric Li, Rahul Popat, Charles Wang, Lauren Yang, Darrel Dennis, James Hefner, Jarrod Clark, Shan Su, Joseph Nemece.

Utah: Hannah Brau, Mariah Pay, Payam Rasheed, Sofia Tiratto, Madison Arriaza, Saja Hassoun, McKenna O'Connor.

Virginia: Caroline Yi, Jordan Hibbs, Kimberly Laker, Lisa Huang, Pavan Krishnan.

Washington: Andrew Chin, David Singleton, Benjamin Stewart, John McManis, Rachel Demaree, Isabella Maehl, Katherine Chen, Nathan Chen, Nicholas Grosinger, Alexandra Marsh, Jessica Waller, William Waller.

West Virginia: Alonzo Webb.

Wyoming: Bailey Anderson, Grace Anderson, Lexi Bedard, Maxwell Bockmann, Sara Brennecke, Molly Burns, Tanner Laurence Christensen, Kaitlyn Erramouspe, Elexis Forgey, Benjamin Gallagher, Daniel Garcia, Liam Guille, Charlotte Hecht, Jarom Herring, Lily Joslin, Carli Knight, Konnar Knotwell, Cassidy Little, Thomas Lubnau III, Gregory Marchal, Patrick Marchal, Conner Martin, Luke McIlvain, Nicholas Nelson, Megan Pachniak, Giovanni Pizzato, McKenzie Powell, Devrae Russell, Karen Russell, Meagan Skolnick, Jaycie Wells, Ben Wetzel.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, on June 5, 2017, the Senate adopted S. Res. 176, a resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem. I am a cosponsor of this resolution. Unfortunately, I missed the vote due to a delayed flight. If I were in Washington, DC, during the time of this vote, I would have cast my vote in support of this resolution.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACCOUNTABILITY AND WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION ACT

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, earlier this month, the Senate passed by voice vote the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017. I recognize this bill is the result of a bipartisan compromise, and I commend Senator TESTER, ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, for his efforts to find agreement on this particularly challenging issue.

Everyone in a position of public trust, particularly those serving at the VA, must be held accountable for their actions. Whistleblowers must also be protected so that misconduct can be brought to light. This balance between accountability and transparency is essential to ensure that the services provided to the public—particularly to veterans—are of the highest quality and that we can attract the best and brightest to Federal service.

Unfortunately, while the bill passed by Congress seeks to strike the appropriate balance, I remain seriously concerned about some of the bill's provi-

sions which would expedite the process of terminating employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, by reducing current due process protections.

To ensure the integrity of the Federal civil service, it is essential that Federal employees have access to constitutionally protected due process rights. Specifically, the bill lowered the evidentiary standard for firing rank-and-file employees for misconduct from "preponderance" of the evidence, 50 percent or more, to substantial, 30 percent or more. Reducing due process protections for rank-and-file VA employees in this manner will make it harder for the Federal Government to attract the best and brightest to public service.

During the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee's consideration of the bill, I cosponsored an amendment offered by Senator BROWN to strike the section of the bill lowering the evidentiary standard. Unfortunately, the amendment was not adopted. Going forward, I intend to closely monitor the VA's implementation of the act to see that these new authorities are not abused in order to retaliate against VA workers. Not only would this be unfair, but it would also exacerbate the Department's challenging retention issues.

I am also disappointed that this bill does not address the longstanding recruitment and retention issues facing the VA. According to the VA, there are over 30,000 vacancies across the VA, including over 150 in Hawaii, for frontline medical personnel that this administration has not filled as of the end of January 2017.

The over 40,000 veterans in Hawaii who are enrolled in the VA healthcare system deserve the best healthcare and highest ethical and professional standards from those they depend on to provide that care. While we must ensure whistleblowers can come forward without fear of retaliation and those who violate the public trust are held accountable, the VA cannot effectively carry out its mission without being fully staffed.

While this legislation was supported by VA Secretary Shulkin and makes some useful changes to improve accountability, we still have much work to do to ensure that veterans in Hawaii and across the country have access to the best healthcare we can provide.

Therefore, going forward, I will closely monitor the VA's implementation of this law to ensure that the changes made are not abused. I will also continue working to see that the staff vacancies in Hawaii and across the country are filled with qualified personnel.

MINORITY HEALTH

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am deeply disappointed by the secrecy that has been employed by my colleagues in their reckless attempts to gut the Affordable Care Act. It is clear to me that, in the absence of hearings,

of public debate, and of any bill text at all, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will go to any length to suppress the undeniable successes associated with the Affordable Care Act.

Unfortunately, that now includes blocking a noncontroversial resolution to promote and bring awareness to National Minority Health Month simply because the text contains facts about the Affordable Care Act. They have decided that concealing the reality of what the Affordable Care Act has brought to minority communities is more important than promoting minority health.

I am proud to help lead this resolution with Senator CARDIN and my colleagues here this afternoon because raising awareness and finding ways to promote minority health is critically important to the future of our Nation and should be a shared priority amongst my colleagues. As of last year, over half of nonelderly Americans who lacked insurance were people of color and minorities face increased barriers when trying to access the care that is available to them.

In the past, our Republican colleagues worked with us on this resolution, which is why it has seen bipartisan and unanimous support. Now, however, like the secret healthcare bill they are drafting behind closed doors, they have turned an important and commonsense resolution into a political football, refusing to pass it unless it is stripped of any and all facts that don't fit their false narrative on the Affordable Care Act. The fact of the matter is that the Affordable Care Act has worked for minority communities. The Affordable Care Act has reduced the uninsured rate for minority communities by at least 35 percent.

It has led to a 7 percent drop in the uninsured rate amongst African Americans and has cut the uninsured rate for Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in half. It has provided new protections for American Indians and Native Alaskans while cutting the uninsured rate amongst those communities by nearly 10 percent. The facts show that minorities have seen some of the largest gains in health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act and, despite the work we still have before us, have more access to affordable coverage than ever before.

Still, many in minority communities struggle to obtain coverage and receive quality care, despite chronic diseases disproportionately impacting many minority groups. That is why the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which was created to address and prevent chronic disease under the ACA, is so critical to minority health. That is also why these same communities will yet again feel the brunt of these callous and misguided cuts should the prevention fund be eliminated along with the ACA.

African Americans are twice as likely to die from diabetes as White Ameri-

cans. Thankfully, the prevention fund has invested \$291 million in diabetes prevention. Latino women are 44 percent more likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer than White women. Therefore, the prevention fund has invested \$218 million in breast and cervical cancer prevention. Overall, the prevention fund has invested \$227 million to the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health Program.

But eliminating the prevention fund wouldn't just negatively impact minority communities. In Connecticut, the Fund has invested over \$27 million in our communities since 2010, improving the lives and well-being of people there every day.

This strong investment has provided more Connecticut women with screenings for cancer. It has given our State health department the ability to better prevent diabetes, heart disease, and stroke and fight obesity through improved physical activity. It has allowed Connecticut to address school health more successfully, enriching our children's lives and inspiring a new generation of more healthy and happy citizens. It has provided the Connecticut Immunization Program with nearly half of its funding, with the program stating they "don't know how we could continue to exist without this funding."

Should the Affordable Care Act be repealed and the Prevention Fund eliminated, with TrumpCare cruelly and inadequately thrust upon our Nation in its place, the consequences would be devastating, not only for minority communities, but for the country as a whole. Bottom line: the Affordable Care Act has improved access to quality and affordable healthcare for all Americans and particularly for those that need it the most.

I sincerely hope that my Republican colleagues stop denying, ignoring, and concealing that the Affordable Care Act—and the minority communities that benefited from it—has helped our Nation's health. I stand ready to build upon the great strides made in improving minority health since the Affordable Care Act, and I hope my colleagues are ready to do the same. Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE LITTLE ROCK AIR FORCE BASE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate the Little Rock Air Force Base, LRAFB, Community Council team on their recognition as the 2017 Association of Defense Communities Member of the Year. This prestigious honor is indicative of the community council's exceptional and unwavering commitment for the past 62 years to the Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force,

U.S. Air Force Reserve, and Arkansas National Guard. These organizations, along with the LRAFB surrounding communities, form the celebrated Team Little Rock.

Since its founding in 1955, Little Rock Air Force Base has enjoyed a tremendous amount of support, respect, and appreciation from within the local community. The LRAFB Community Council, comprised of dedicated local civic leaders, has passionately championed the base's mission, while fostering partnership efforts between the military and civilian communities. Furthermore, as the Department of Defense and U.S. Air Force have faced an unprecedented 8 years of fiscal uncertainty, the community council has remained a steadfast leader and staunch advocate for the Team Little Rock mission, its airmen, and their families.

The LRAFB Community Council long ago established an enduring relationship with its Arkansas congressional delegation to ensure a sustained awareness of base needs, successes, and challenges. This outstanding example of leadership demonstrates the community council's commitment to building a dedicated and resilient community network around Little Rock's sole Air Force installation.

The level of collaboration between the community council and Team Little Rock is simply unprecedented. For example, Jacksonville and Little Rock have adopted ordinances and regulations preventing civilian encroachment that would impede aircraft operations, while many military-civilian initiatives have been formulated to offer mutual services, thus improving quality of life on both sides of the fence. Moreover, the Jacksonville fire department and emergency services team regularly participate in both exercises and real-world scenarios with their military counterparts. Finally, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson appointed past community council president Brad Hegeman to chair the Governor's military affairs committee in order to address the assets, economic impact, benefits, and needs of military installations and military-related businesses throughout Arkansas.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have consistently witnessed the extraordinary and tireless support received by Team Little Rock on behalf of the Little Rock Air Force Base Community Council. The entire community council team is very deserving of this incredible honor, and I am thrilled to officially recognize them as the 2017 Association of Defense Communities Member of the Year. Congratulations, Team Little Rock.●

TRIBUTE TO WENDY NOREN

• Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, fair elections and voting rights for all Americans are integral to our way of life. Today I wish to honor a dedicated public servant and great Missourian who has spent her entire career ensuring these principals for Boone

Countians, Missourians, and people of the United States, Ms. Wendy Noren. After 39 years in the Boone County clerk's office—35 as the Boone County clerk—Ms. Noren is resigning on June 23, 2017.

Wendy began her service to Boone County as deputy county clerk in 1972. She won her first election to county clerk in 1982 and won the next eight consecutive elections, only once having an opponent.

In addition to registering generations of Missourians to vote, Wendy has worked tirelessly during the last 35 years to ensure smooth, fair, and accurate elections and results. She is a leading election expert at local, State, Federal, and international levels. Some of her accomplishments include serving as an international elections monitor in Albania in 1997 and again in Bosnia in 2001; in 2008, she hosted international election experts studying methods for conducting elections. As the legislative chair of the Missouri County Clerks and Election Authorities, she helped draft several Missouri election law reforms, assisted in writing the Help America Vote Act, and was a part of the reformation of national election policies after the 2000 election. Ms. Noren has been reappointed to the US Election Assistance Commission every 2 years since first being appointed in 2004.

Closer to Missourians' hearts, Wendy is implicitly trusted for her fairness and accuracy and her tireless devotion to ensuring all Missourians have the opportunity to vote. Concerned that rural counties couldn't afford election expenses prompted by the Help America Vote Act, she advocated that the Federal Government assist local election authorities to implement the law. She has been an early adapter of technology to assist voters to register, to be informed about elections, and to securely cast their votes. For instance, rather than using the existing software to join a federally required voter registration database, she developed her own, saving taxpayers approximately \$125,000.

I ask today that my fellow Senators join me in recognizing Wendy Noren, Missouri's own "Empress of Elections," as a great Missourian, Boone Countian, and public servant dedicated to ensuring all Americans—and, indeed, citizens of the world—are able to participate in fair, free elections.●

RECOGNIZING MONTPELIER SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, this month we celebrate the Montpelier Senior Activity Center's 50th anniversary. For half a century, the center has provided opportunities for healthy aging and lifelong learning that enhance the quality of life for seniors. The Montpelier Senior Activity Center, established in 1967 and nestled in our

State's capital, has the mission of enhancing the quality of life for the older adults in the Montpelier area by developing physical, mental, cultural, social, and economic well-being in a welcoming and flexible environment.

A Nation is judged by how it cares for its most vulnerable. It is undeniable that we are living in a time when many Vermonters and Americans are having to do more with less and the most vulnerable among us are making the unacceptable decisions like choosing between paying for healthcare, food on the table, or a roof over their head. In Vermont, more than 11,000 seniors are living in poverty.

At a time of massive political discontent, we need to focus on building up, not dismantling, our communities. In Montpelier, VT, just that is happening, as seniors are able to access services that help them live out their lives in dignity.

The center serves more than 1,000 seniors every year, including more than one of every five seniors in Montpelier. In 2016, the Montpelier Senior Activity Center provided more than 17,000 nutritious home-delivered and community meals for seniors. More than 80 percent of senior activity center participants report that their participation makes them feel healthier.

The Montpelier Senior Activity Center celebrated its 50-year anniversary on Saturday, June 10, 2017. To know that seniors have been able to access supportive care and resources for so long and have truly become a well-established part of the community is commendable. As Montpelier Senior Activity Center Day is commemorated, please understand that the center's work saves and empowers countless lives. I join the Montpelier community to celebrate this milestone anniversary.●

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF SUMMIT, SOUTH DAKOTA

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Summit, SD. The town of Summit will be celebrating its quasiquicentennial on June 23 through 25, 2017. Summit will host quasiquicentennial events, which include school tours, alumni gatherings, a craft and flea market, competitions, tournaments, and a parade.

Summit is located in the Coteau des Prairies in Roberts County. The Summit area has long been known as a community enriched with various outdoor activities, such as fishing, hunting, and camping. Since its founding 125 years ago, the community of Summit continues to serve as a strong example of South Dakota values and traditions. It is also known as the location of the annual Fog Fest.

I offer my congratulations to the citizens of Summit on their quasiquicentennial celebration and wish

them continued prosperity in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DE- CLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13466 OF JUNE 26, 2008, WITH RE- SPECT TO NORTH KOREA—PM 10

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 of 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 that provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to North Korea declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008, expanded in scope in Executive Order 13551 of August 30, 2010, addressed further in Executive Order 13570 of April 18, 2011, further expanded in scope in Executive Order 13687 of January 2, 2015, and under which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13722 of March 15, 2016, is to continue in effect beyond June 26, 2017.

The existence and risk of proliferation of weapons-usable fissile material on the Korean Peninsula; the actions and policies of the Government of North Korea that destabilize the Korean Peninsula and imperil United States Armed Forces, allies, and trading partners in the region, including its pursuit of nuclear and missile programs; and other provocative, destabilizing, and repressive actions and policies of the Government of North Korea, continue to constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to North Korea.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, June 21, 2017.

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13219 OF JUNE 26, 2001, WITH RESPECT TO THE WESTERN BALKANS—PM 11

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 of 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 that provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the Western Balkans that was declared in Executive Order 13219 of June 25, 2001, is to continue in effect beyond June 25, 2017.

The threat constituted by the actions of persons engaged in, or assisting, sponsoring, or supporting (i) extremist violence in the Republic of Macedonia and elsewhere in the Western Balkans region, or (ii) acts obstructing implementation of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia or United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, in Kosovo, has not been resolved. In addition, Executive Order 13219 was amended by Executive Order 13304 of May 28, 2003, to take additional steps with respect to acts obstructing implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement of 2001 relating to Macedonia.

The acts of extremist violence and obstructionist activity outlined in these Executive Orders are hostile to United States interests and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to the Western Balkans.

DONALD J. TRUMP,
THE WHITE HOUSE, June 21, 2017.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:02 p.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. 625. An act to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1393. An act to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees

for employment duties performed in other States.

H.R. 1551. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the credit for production from advanced nuclear power facilities.

H.R. 2132. An act to require the implementation of a redress process and review of the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules for aviation security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2190. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's real property portfolio, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2283. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to improve morale within the Department of Homeland Security workforce by conferring new responsibilities to the Chief Human Capital Officer, establishing an employee engagement steering committee, requiring action plans, and authorizing an annual employee award program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2484. An act to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict.

H.R. 2742. An act to amend title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to adopt an electronic system to help expedite the placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption, across State lines, and to provide funding to aid States in developing such a system, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2834. An act to improve the well-being of, and improve permanency outcomes for, children and families affected by heroin, opioids, and other substance abuse.

H.R. 2847. An act to make improvements to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and related provisions.

H.R. 2857. An act to support foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse.

H.R. 2866. An act to review and improve licensing standards for placement in a relative foster family home.

The message also announced that the House agreed to the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1238) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 5:00 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 1094. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 625. An act to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism, and for other

purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1393. An act to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 2132. An act to require the implementation of a redress process and review of the Transportation Security Administration's intelligence-based screening rules for aviation security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 2190. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's real property portfolio, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 2283. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to improve morale within the Department of Homeland Security workforce by conferring new responsibilities to the Chief Human Capital Officer, establishing an employee engagement steering committee, requiring action plans, and authorizing an annual employee award program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 2834. An act to improve the well-being of, and improve permanency outcomes for, children and families affected by heroin, opioids, and other substance abuse; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 2847. An act to make improvements to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and related provisions; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 2857. An act to support foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 2866. An act to review and improve licensing standards for placement in a relative foster family home; to the Committee on Finance.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 2484. An act to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict.

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-1976. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Fiscal Year 2017 Operational Energy Budget Certification Report"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1977. 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-1978. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Accidental Release Prevention Requirements: Risk Management Programs Under the Clean Air Act; Further Delay of Effective Date" (FRL No. 9963-55-OLEM) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 13, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1979. 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; Oklahoma; Infrastructure and Interstate Transport for the 2012 Fine Particulate Matter Standard" (FRL No. 9958-61-Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 13, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1980. 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; New Mexico; Regional Haze Progress Report State Implementation Plan" (FRL No. 9962-75-Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 13, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1981. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval of California Air Plan Revisions, Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District, Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District, and San Diego County Air Pollution Control District" (FRL No. 9960-40-Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 13, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1982. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval of Nevada Air Plan Revisions, Clark County Department of Air Quality and Washoe County Health District" (FRL No. 9963-43-Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 13, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1983. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report prepared by the Department of State on progress toward a negotiated solution of the Cyprus question covering the period February 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-1984. A communication from the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, a corrected Semi-annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1985. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Policy, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Civil Monetary Penalties Inflation Adjustment" (OAG 156) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1986. A communication from the Deputy Chief Counsel, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Technology In-

novation—Personnel Exchanges" (RIN0693-AB62) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1987. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Proposed Amendment of Class D Airspace; Kingsville, TX" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9511)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1988. 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, Grass Range, MT" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0047)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1989. 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; Kyle-Oakley Field Airport, Murray, KY" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9443)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1990. 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; Bar Harbor, ME" ((RIN2120-AA66) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9285)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1991. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Part 95 Instrument Flight Rules; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 533" (RIN2120-AA63) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1992. A communication from the Executive Director, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's 2016 Annual Report to the President and Congress; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1993. A communication from the Executive Director, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's 2016 Annual Report to the President and Congress; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1994. 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; Rolls-Royce plc Turbofan Engines" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2014-0363)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1995. 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; Rolls-Royce plc Turbofan Engines" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0114)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1996. 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; Rolls-Royce plc Turbofan Engines" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0186)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1997. 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; NavWorx, Inc. Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast Universal Access Transceiver Units" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9226)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1998. 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; Slingsby Aviation Ltd. Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0048)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1999. 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-2017-0124)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2000. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9438)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2001. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-8849)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2002. 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-2015-8428)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June

16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2003. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9431)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2004. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-7262)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2005. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0123)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2006. 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-2015-0084)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2007. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-8182)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2008. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9524)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2009. 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; Zodiac Seats California LLC Seating System" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-5595)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2010. 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-2016-6667)) received during adjournment of

the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2011. 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-2016-8179)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2012. 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-2016-8848)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2013. 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-2016-9075)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2014. 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-2016-6666)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2015. 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; Learjet, Inc., Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0501)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2016. 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; Diamond Aircraft Industries GmbH Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0506)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2017. 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; ZLIN AIRCRAFT a.s. Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0156)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2018. 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. Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9550)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2019. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Embraer S.A. Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2016-9507)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2020. 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; DG Flugzeugbau GmbH Gliders" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0158)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2021. 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; British Aerospace Regional Aircraft Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0053)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2022. 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; Stemme AG Gliders" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2017-0451)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 16, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2023. A communication from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; Seafood Import Monitoring Program" (RIN0648-BF09) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 97. A bill to enable civilian research and development of advanced nuclear energy technologies by private and public institutions, to expand theoretical and practical knowledge of nuclear physics, chemistry, and materials science, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-115).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

*Neomi Rao, of the District of Columbia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

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. ROUNDS (for himself, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 1387. A bill to require the Secretary of Defense to implement processes and procedures to provide expedited evaluation and treatment for prenatal surgery under the TRICARE program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. ROUNDS:

S. 1388. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for voting assistance officers for members of the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. KAINE, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. WARREN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1389. A bill to allow the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to provide greater protection to servicemembers; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 1390. A bill to strengthen the position of the United States as the world's leading innovator by amending title 35, United States Code, to protect the property rights of the inventors that grow the country's economy; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1391. A bill to amend title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to restore Medicaid coverage for citizens of the Freely Associated States lawfully residing in the United States under the Compacts of Free Association between the Government of the United States and the Governments of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 1392. A bill to establish the Public-Private Partnership Advisory Council to End Human Trafficking to advise the Senior Policy Operating Group and the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1393. A bill to streamline the process by which active duty military, reservists, and veterans receive commercial driver's licenses; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 1394. A bill to apply the medical certification standards of the Federal Aviation Administration to operators of air balloons; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 1395. A bill to revise the boundaries of certain John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System units in Delaware; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1396. A bill to require that certain standards for commercial driver's licenses applicable to former members of the armed services or reserves also apply to current members of the armed services or reserves; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. STRANGE (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 1397. A bill to nullify any generalized, routine or ongoing reporting requirement imposed on a person licensed under section 923 of title 18, United States Code, that is based on the geographic location in which the licensee is located or on the sale of multiple rifles or shotguns, or any specific type of rifle or shotgun, to the same person; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. PETERS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1398. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, to release an interim report related to aquatic nuisance species control, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 1399. A bill to provide high-skilled non-immigrant visas for nationals of the Republic of Korea, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. UDALL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 1400. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 1401. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to address lead contamination in school drinking water; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 1402. A bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make loan guarantees and grants to finance certain improvements to school lunch facilities, to train school food service personnel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. UDALL, and Mr. ALEXANDER):

S. 1403. A bill to amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to establish the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to place youth and veterans in national service positions to conserve, restore, and enhance the great outdoors of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 1404. A bill to amend the Natural Gas Act to provide for expanded natural gas ex-

ports; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. PERDUE, and Mr. BENNET):

S. Res. 196. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate on the challenges the conflict in Syria poses to long-term stability and prosperity in Lebanon; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. Res. 197. A resolution to provide sufficient time for legislation to be read; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. Res. 198. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that any sweeping health care legislation must be drafted in public under the watchful eye of the people of the United States; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 198

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 198, a bill to require continued and enhanced annual reporting to Congress in the Annual Report on International Religious Freedom on anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, the safety and security of European Jewish communities, and the efforts of the United States to partner with European governments, the European Union, and civil society groups, to combat anti-Semitism, and for other purposes.

S. 294

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 294, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to clarify the Food and Drug Administration's jurisdiction over certain tobacco products, and to protect jobs and small businesses involved in the sale, manufacturing and distribution of traditional and premium cigars.

S. 298

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 298, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 340

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 340, a bill to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes.

S. 486

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 486, a bill to amend title XVIII of

the Social Security Act to provide for the non-application of Medicare competitive acquisition rates to complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and accessories.

S. 515

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 515, a bill to require the Secretary of Labor to maintain a publicly available list of all employers that relocate a call center overseas, to make such companies ineligible for Federal grants or guaranteed loans, and to require disclosure of the physical location of business agents engaging in customer service communications, and for other purposes.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 540, a bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

S. 717

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 717, a bill to promote pro bono legal services as a critical way in which to empower survivors of domestic violence.

S. 777

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 777, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow deductions and credits relating to expenditures in connection with marijuana sales conducted in compliance with State law.

S. 823

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 823, a bill to ensure the digital contents of electronic equipment and online accounts belonging to or in the possession of United States persons entering or exiting the United States are adequately protected at the border, and for other purposes.

S. 829

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 829, a bill to reauthorize the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 856

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 856, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Sta-

tistics Act to combat campus sexual assault, and for other purposes.

S. 905

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 905, a bill to require a report on, and to authorize technical assistance for, accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Syria, and for other purposes.

S. 1013

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1013, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax benefits for investments in gigabit opportunity zones.

S. 1020

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1020, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the proper tax treatment of personal service income earned in pass-thru entities.

S. 1091

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1091, a bill to establish a Federal Task Force to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

S. 1174

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1174, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that a deduction equal to fair market value shall be allowed for charitable contributions of literary, musical, artistic, or scholarly compositions created by the donor.

S. 1182

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1182, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the 100th anniversary of The American Legion.

S. 1256

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1256, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 23d Headquarters, Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company in recognition of their unique and distinguished service as a "Ghost Army" that conducted deception operations in Europe during World War II.

S. 1311

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1311, a bill to provide assistance in abolishing

human trafficking in the United States.

S. 1312

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1312, a bill to prioritize the fight against human trafficking in the United States.

S. 1320

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1320, a bill to reform apportionments to general aviation airports under the airport improvement program, to improve project delivery at certain airports, and to designate certain airports as disaster relief airports, and for other purposes.

S. 1352

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1352, a bill to establish a tax credit for on-site apprenticeship programs, and for other purposes.

S. 1353

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1353, a bill to require States to automatically register eligible voters to vote in elections for Federal offices, and for other purposes.

S. 1357

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1357, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide a standard definition of therapeutic family care services in Medicaid.

S.J. RES. 8

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 8, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

S.J. RES. 46

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 46, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

S. RES. 102

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 102, a resolution reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Mexico, and recognizing bilateral cooperation that advances the national security and national interests of both countries.

S. RES. 195

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from

California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 195, a resolution recognizing June 20, 2017, as "World Refugee Day".

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. KAINE, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. WARREN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1389. A bill to allow the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to provide greater protection to servicemembers; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today, along with Senators BROWN, TESTER, BLUMENTHAL, KAINE, DUCKWORTH, WARREN, BALDWIN, FRANKEN, KLOBUCHAR, CORTEZ MASTO, VAN HOLLEN, and MENENDEZ, I am reintroducing the Military Consumer Enforcement Act to further strengthen consumer protections for service members.

Our Nation has a strong tradition of working to protect our service members while they sacrifice to keep our Nation, safe. Building on these efforts, Congress passed the Soldiers' and Sailor's Civil Relief Act in 1940 to provide essential financial protections for service members to "enable such persons to devote their entire energy to the defense needs of the Nation." Now called the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA), this law provides such protections as prohibiting the eviction of service members and their dependents from rental or mortgaged properties and capping the interest at 6% on debts incurred prior to an individual entering active duty military service.

Despite the importance of the SCRA's protections to our service members, enforcement of this critical law has been inconsistent and subject to the discretion of our financial regulators. For example, according to a July 2012 report from the Government Accountability Office, the estimated percentage of depository institutions that serviced mortgages that were examined for SCRA compliance varied by year between 2007 through 2011 at a rate of 4% in 2007, 17% in 2008, 18% in 2009, 26% in 2010, and 15% in 2011. Without a change in the law, SCRA enforcement will continue to be subject to the changing priorities of the financial regulators, which can also change with each newly elected President. Simply put, prioritizing the consumer protection of our service members should not be discretionary; it should be mandatory. Our legislation ensures that SCRA enforcement will be a permanent priority for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, CFPB, which Congress created to enforce Federal consumer financial protection laws.

In 2010, as we debated the authorizing legislation for the CFPB, I led the bi-

partisan effort to ensure the CFPB would play a key role in protecting service members through the establishment of an Office of Servicemember Affairs, OSA. Since that time, the CFPB, through its enforcement actions, has helped service members recover approximately \$130 million in relief from unscrupulous actors in the financial marketplace and through the OSA's monitoring of complaints, the CFPB has helped other regulators provide more than \$60 million in relief for more than 78,000 service members harmed by SCRA violations. Imagine how much more the CFPB could do for our service members if it could do more than just refer potential SCRA violations to other regulators and educate service members about their SCRA rights. With this demonstrated record of success in protecting our service members, the CFPB should be empowered, as it would be under this legislation, to enforce certain key SCRA provisions, such as the protections against default judgments and being charged no more than the maximum rate of interest on debts incurred before military service.

We should do all we can to make sure there is a strong watchdog on the beat that can enforce the protections we have put in place. When it comes to the SCRA, that strong watchdog should be the CFPB. Our legislation is supported by more than thirty groups, including the National Military Family Association, the Military Officers Association of America, Veterans Education Success, Student Veterans of America, Consumer Federation of America, Americans for Financial Reform, Public Citizen, the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, U.S. PIRG, Consumers Union, National Association of Consumer Advocates, National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low income clients), National Community Reinvestment Coalition, Center for Popular Democracy, Alliance for Justice, American Association for Justice, and the Center for Responsible Lending. I urge our colleagues to help honor our commitment to our Nation's service members by joining us in this effort to improve the supervision and enforcement of the SCRA.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1393. A bill to streamline the process by which active duty military, reservists, and veterans receive commercial driver's licenses; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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

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

S. 1393

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 "Jobs for Our Heroes Act".

SEC. 2. MEDICAL CERTIFICATE FOR VETERANS OPERATING COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES.

(a) QUALIFIED EXAMINERS.—Section 5403(d)(2) of the FAST Act (49 U.S.C. 31149 note; 129 Stat. 1548) is amended to read as follows:

"(2) QUALIFIED EXAMINER.—The term 'qualified examiner' means an individual who—

"(A) is employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs as an advanced practice nurse, doctor of chiropractic, doctor of medicine, doctor of osteopathy, physician assistant, or other medical professional;

"(B) is licensed, certified, or registered in a State to perform physical examinations;

"(C) is familiar with the standards for, and physical requirements of, an operator required to be medically certified under section 31149 of title 49, United States Code; and

"(D) has never, with respect to such section, been found to have acted fraudulently, including by fraudulently awarding a medical certificate."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 5403 of the FAST Act (49 U.S.C. 31149 note; 129 Stat. 1548) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking "physician-approved veteran operator, the qualified physician" and inserting "veteran operator approved by a qualified examiner, the qualified examiner";

(2) in subsection (b)(1)—

(A) by striking "the physician" and inserting "the examiner"; and

(B) by striking "qualified physician" and inserting "qualified examiner";

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking "qualified physicians" and inserting "qualified examiners"; and

(B) by striking "such physicians" and inserting "such examiners"; and

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) as paragraphs (3), (1), and (2), respectively, and by moving the text of paragraph (3), as redesignated, to appear after paragraph (2), as redesignated; and

(B) in paragraph (3), as redesignated—

(i) in the paragraph heading, by striking "PHYSICIAN-APPROVED VETERAN OPERATOR" and inserting "VETERAN OPERATOR APPROVED BY A QUALIFIED EXAMINER"; and

(ii) by striking "physician-approved veteran operator" and inserting "veteran operator approved by a qualified examiner".

(c) RULEMAKING.—The amendments made by this section shall be incorporated into any rulemaking proceeding related to section 5403 of the FAST Act (49 U.S.C. 31149 note; 129 Stat. 1548) that is being conducted as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE STANDARDS FOR CURRENT AND FORMER MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

Section 31305(d) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking "VETERAN OPERATORS" and inserting "OPERATORS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, RESERVISTS, OR VETERANS";

(2) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking "subparagraph (A) during, at least," and inserting "subparagraph (A)—

"(i) while serving in the armed forces or reserve components; and

"(ii) during"; and

(3) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(A) by inserting "current or" before "former" each place the term appears; and

(B) by inserting "1 of" before "the reserve components".

By Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 1395. A bill to revise the boundaries of certain John H. Chafee Coastal

Barrier Resources System units in Delaware; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to adjust the boundary of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act, CBRA, map unit for North Bethany Beach, Delaware. I am pleased to be working in this effort with the junior Senator from Delaware, Mr. COONS, who joins me as an original cosponsor.

This map change implements a recommendation made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service discovered during its recent digital mapping pilot project that a portion of the North Bethany Beach unit encompassing the South Shore Marina development was included by mistake when the map was created in 1990. The Fish and Wildlife released a report to Congress in November of 2016 on the results of the mapping pilot project required by the 2006 Coastal Barrier Resources Reauthorization Act (PL 109-226). Delaware was part of the pilot project, and the report contains the recommendation for this map change.

This map change can occur only through an act of Congress.

CBRA is a map-based law enacted in 1982 recognizing that certain actions and programs of the Federal Government subsidize and encourage development on coastal barriers. This coastal building contributes to the loss of natural resources and threatens human life, health and property. The CBRA system currently contains 859 geographic units in 23 States and territories along the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico coasts. The CBRA units are depicted on a set of maps that is maintained by the Secretary of the Interior through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

While CBRA does not prohibit or regulate development, it removes the Federal incentives to build on these undeveloped, unstable and environmentally sensitive areas. CBRA seeks to save taxpayers' money, keep people out of harm's way, and conserve natural resources by restricting most new Federal expenditures and financial assistance (e.g., beach nourishment, disaster assistance, and flood insurance) in areas designated within the CBRA system. That is why Mr. President, it is important to make sure these maps are accurate and that they do not include previously developed property. This bill will achieve that objective for the North Bethany Beach area.

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

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

S. 1395

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

SECTION 1. REPLACEMENT OF JOHN H. CHAFFEE COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES SYSTEM MAP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The map subtitled “Delaware Seashore Unit DE-07P, North Bethany Beach Unit H01” and dated December 6, 2013, that is included in the set of maps entitled “Coastal Barrier Resources System” referred to in section 4(a) of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3503(a)) and relating to certain John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System units in the State of Delaware, is replaced by the map entitled “Delaware Seashore Unit DE-07/DE-07P, North Bethany Beach Unit H01” and dated March 16, 2016.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary of the Interior shall keep the replacement map referred to in subsection (a) on file and available for inspection in accordance with section 4(b) of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (16 U.S.C. 3503(b)).

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 1402. A bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make loan guarantees and grants to finance certain improvements to school lunch facilities, to train school food service personnel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague from North Dakota, Senator HEITKAMP, in sponsoring the School Food Modernization Act to assist schools in providing healthier meals to students throughout the country.

School meals play a vital role in the lives of our young people. More than 30 million children participate in the National School Lunch Program every school day and more than 14 million eat school breakfasts, with participation rising steadily in Maine and nationwide. In Maine, 48 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on household income.

Moreover, the food served at schools affects children's health and well-being. Many children consume up to half their daily caloric intake at school and some get their most nutritious meal of the day at school instead of at home. At the same time, too many of our children are at risk of serious disease, which may have a lifelong effect on their health as they grow to adulthood.

In response to these health concerns, our schools have stepped up. For example, in the New Sweden Consolidated School in Aroostook County, Maine, food service manager Melanie Lagasse prepares meals from scratch instead of opening cans or pushing a defrost button. The school's 64 students, aged preschool to 8th grade, have grown to relish the chicken stew, baked fish, and meatloaf that she makes fresh.

Many schools, however, lack the right tools for preparing meals rich in fresh ingredients. Schools built decades ago often lack the equipment and infrastructure necessary to do more than reheat and serve one or two meal options each day.

To serve healthier meals, 99 percent of Maine school districts need to ac-

quire at least one piece of equipment and almost 50 percent of districts need kitchen infrastructure upgrades. The median equipment need per school alone is \$45,000. Making the required changes to infrastructure is even more costly, with 41 percent of schools needing more physical space, 22 percent more electrical capacity, 21 percent more plumbing capacity, and 19 percent more ventilation.

It is estimated that \$58.8 million would be necessary just in Maine for the equipment and infrastructure upgrades needed to serve healthy meals to all of our students. That far exceeds the \$89,000 in grants that the U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded Maine last fiscal year. Maine is not alone. In a recent survey of school nutrition directors, the most frequently cited financial concern was equipment costs, ranking higher than even labor and food costs.

The School Food Modernization Act seeks to help food service personnel offer a wide variety of nutritious and appealing meals and snacks to all students. First, the bill would establish a loan guarantee assistance program within USDA to help schools acquire new equipment to prepare and serve healthier meals. Second, it would provide targeted grant assistance to provide the seed funding needed to upgrade kitchen infrastructure or to purchase high-quality equipment such as commercial ovens, steamers, and stoves. Finally, to aid school food service personnel in running successful, healthy programs, the legislation would authorize USDA to provide support on a competitive basis to highly qualified third-party trainers to develop and administer training and technical assistance, including online programs.

Senator HEITKAMP and I appreciate that provisions of this legislation were incorporated into the Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation that was passed out of the Agriculture Committee last Congress. We encourage our colleagues to continue to support school kitchen equipment needs as the reauthorization process continues.

Mr. President, if our school children are going to be able to learn and compete, they need to be healthy and their minds and bodies fully nourished. This bill would help us achieve that goal.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 196—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE CHALLENGES THE CONFLICT IN SYRIA POSES TO LONG-TERM STABILITY AND PROSPERITY IN LEBANON

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. PERDUE, and Mr. BENNET) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 196

Whereas the stability of Lebanon, a pluralistic democracy in the Middle East, is in the interests of the United States and United States allies in the region;

Whereas the United States has provided more than \$2,000,000,000 in assistance to Lebanon in the past decade, including training and equipment for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF);

Whereas the conflict in Syria threatens stability in Lebanon as a result of violent attacks against Lebanese citizens perpetrated by combatants active in Syria, as well as a massive influx of refugees fleeing the conflict;

Whereas the United States has contributed more than \$6,500,000,000 in humanitarian assistance for victims of the conflict in Syria, including for refugees in Lebanon;

Whereas the people of Lebanon have shown great generosity in welcoming more than 1,500,000 refugees from Syria, a refugee population equal to ¼ of its native population;

Whereas Lebanon is hosting more refugees proportionally than any nation in the world;

Whereas the refugee crisis has challenged Lebanon's economy, which faces a national debt that is approximately 140 percent of gross domestic product and underperforming economic growth;

Whereas the LAF have been called into direct conflict with the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) as a result of attacks carried out by the terrorist group in Lebanon;

Whereas the Syrian conflict has placed additional strains on the Government of Lebanon as it continues to confront political deadlock that has kept the presidency vacant for more than two years;

Whereas the unique political constitution of Lebanon hinges on that nation's distinct demographic and social equilibrium;

Whereas the prolongation of the Syrian conflict has the potential to upset the precarious social and political balance in Lebanon;

Whereas the constitution of Lebanon is further undermined by undue foreign influence, particularly by the Islamic Republic of Iran through its terrorist proxy Hizbollah;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1701 in 2006, which calls for the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon and stresses the importance of full control over Lebanon by the Government of Lebanon; and

Whereas Hizbollah continues to violate United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, including by replenishing its stock of rockets and missiles in South Lebanon: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the importance of bilateral United States assistance to the Government of Lebanon in building its capacity to provide services and security for Lebanese citizens and curbing the influence of Hizbollah;

(2) encourages continued coordination between the Department of State, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and humanitarian organizations to ensure that refugees from the conflict in Syria, including those in Lebanon, are supported in such a way as to mitigate any potentially adverse effect on their host countries;

(3) recognizes that it is in the interests of the United States to seek a negotiated end to the conflict in Syria that includes the ultimate departure of Bashar al-Assad, which would allow for the eventual return of the millions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and other countries around the world;

(4) supports full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701; and

(5) recognizes the LAF as the sole institution entrusted with the defense of Lebanon's sovereignty and supports United States partnerships with the LAF, particularly through the global coalition to defeat the terrorist group ISIS.

SENATE RESOLUTION 197—TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT TIME FOR LEGISLATION TO BE READ

Mr. PAUL submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 197

Resolved, That (a) it shall not be in order for the Senate to consider any bill, resolution, message, conference report, amendment between the Houses, amendment, treaty, or any other measure or matter until 1 session day has passed since introduction for every 20 pages included in the measure or matter in the usual form plus 1 session day for any number of remaining pages less than 20 in the usual form.

(b)(1) Any Senator may raise a point of order that consideration of any bill, resolution, message, conference report, amendment, treaty, or any other measure or matter is not in order under subsection (a). No motion to table the point of order shall be in order.

(2) Paragraph (1) may be waived or suspended only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. All motions to waive under this paragraph shall be debatable collectively for not to exceed 3 hours equally divided between the Senator raising the point of order and the Senator moving to waive the point of order or their designees. A motion to waive the point of order shall not be amendable.

(3) This resolution is enacted pursuant to the power granted to each House of Congress to determine the Rules of its Proceedings in clause 2 of section 5 of article I of the Constitution of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 198—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT ANY SWEEPING HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION MUST BE DRAFTED IN PUBLIC UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. TESTER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 198

Whereas the people of the United States deserve and demand that legislation be created through a transparent, bipartisan process to ensure that they can hold their elected representatives accountable;

Whereas the proper functioning of representative democracy requires full transparency in the legislative process;

Whereas it has been widely reported that a group of Senators is working privately in a partisan fashion to craft national health care legislation in the Senate;

Whereas this group is secretly gathering in closed-door meetings that exclude the public and press;

Whereas Senate leadership has refused to commit to holding a single public hearing on this legislation before going directly to the Senate floor for a vote;

Whereas the draft health care legislation under consideration by a secretive group is

one of the largest public policy reforms taken up by Congress in generations;

Whereas this legislation will affect the lives of all people in the United States;

Whereas health care constitutes ⅓ of the gross domestic product of the United States; and

Whereas Congress is elected by the people to serve the people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the creation of any sweeping health care legislation must be done in a transparent, bipartisan manner in full view of the people of the United States and not behind closed doors.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m. on Thursday, June 22; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Billingslea nomination postcloture; finally, that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Billingslea nomination.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of our Democratic colleagues.

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

The Senator from Washington.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, since the first day of this administration, I have heard from women in my home State and nationwide who are fearful of what President Trump will do to their health and rights—from appointing a Supreme Court Justice who has made clear that he opposes the historic ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, to trying at every turn to undermine women's access to safe, legal abortion here in the United States and abroad, to proposing a budget that would defund Planned Parenthood and devastate investments in women's health. I know from letters, calls, emails, tweets, rallies—you name it—that across the country women feel under attack because of this administration's policies and the willingness of Republicans in Congress to make sure they are carried out.

Women are worried and, unfortunately, they have a right to be, especially in this moment. In a matter of

days, Senate Republicans could bring their version of TrumpCare to this floor. As many of us have said, this is the worst bill for women in a generation. It will cut off access to critical healthcare services at Planned Parenthood, our Nation's largest provider of women's healthcare. It will allow our insurance companies to go back to charging women more and interfere with women's constitutionally protected reproductive rights. In fact, at literally every stage of life, TrumpCare would stand in the way of women's access to the healthcare they need.

Under this bill, young girls nationwide would lose Medicaid coverage. College students across the country who go to Planned Parenthood for contraception would find the centers they rely on shuttered. Women would pay \$1,000 more a month for maternity care, and women battling cancer and women who are survivors would have to look ahead to being discriminated against for having a preexisting condition. Senior women would watch their premiums spike by as much as 850 percent because of the age tax Republicans have inexplicitly chosen to include in this bill.

I could go on, but let me just say that since President Trump and Republicans first began trying to jam this bill through, I have heard from countless women who would be impacted by the cruel policies I have just described.

One of them is Kelly. Her son has a developmental disability and he gets Medicaid coverage. There is Jennifer, who is fighting cancer tooth and nail and is now worrying about what is going to happen if the Medicaid expansion goes away. There is Tammy, whose congenital heart disease made pregnancy life threatening and who was able to afford safe and effective contraception because of her insurance coverage. Those are just a few examples. I am so grateful to them and to the many, many others who have spoken out and shared their stories.

We might think that with so many women thinking about how this bill would impact them, with so much at stake for women's health, rights, and financial security should TrumpCare be signed into law, Senate Republicans would want to see what women thought of their version of TrumpCare. But they have made it abundantly and offensively clear that they do not.

They put together a working group of 13 men to draft their version. They negotiated in secret. They wrote this bill in back rooms. Now Senate Republicans are keeping it under lock and key until the very last minute so that women have as little time as possible to see just how badly this bill could harm them and their families. Women aren't going to put up with that, and Democrats aren't either.

I am proud to be here this evening with a number of my Democratic colleagues to call on Senate Republicans to stop hiding their bill from women and bring it out in the light for the scrutiny it deserves.

My Republican colleagues are right, I think, to be ashamed of this version of TrumpCare. But that doesn't mean it should be hidden from view, and we are not going to stop until women across the country get to read the fine print, instead of taking 13 male Republican Senators' word for it.

While this is a truly difficult and frightening time for anyone who believes that women should be able to make their own decisions about their own healthcare and who think politicians should not be able to interfere with those decisions, I have also been truly inspired by the response I have seen to the extreme agenda President Trump and Republicans are pursuing.

Since the first days of this administration, when I was so proud to march with millions of women across this country and the world to stand up for women's health and women's rights, women have continued to lead the fight against this administration's constant efforts to take our country backward. That is exactly what TrumpCare would do.

So let me be very clear. If Senate Republicans continue down this path, if they choose to jam a secret bill through Congress and get it signed into law instead of listening to people in this country and to us and working with us on real solutions to fix our healthcare system, you can be sure that women across the country—who will be forced to pay more for their care or lose it altogether—are going to be ready to make sure Republicans own every ounce of the harm they cause.

So I am here tonight to urge Republicans to make the right choice, and I will join women across the country in holding them fully accountable if they don't.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President I join my colleagues, Senator MURRAY and others, and I thank Senator MURRAY for her leadership on this important issue.

Right now, 13 of our male colleagues are sequestered away somewhere, plotting—and I use that word, and that is an accurate word because that is what it feels like to those of us who are shut out of the process of putting together the Senate bill. These 13 men are plotting how to deprive millions of women across our country access to essential healthcare—women all over our country. That is half of our population. Frankly, it is sad that we are having this debate about the need for openness and transparency that impacts half of our population and that is one-sixth of our economy.

Sadly, it isn't surprising. Republicans in Congress have fought to deny women access to healthcare for decades. Now they have a willing and complicit ally in this crusade—Donald Trump. In their zeal to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the President and his allies in Congress don't appear to be concerned about the collateral damage they leave behind.

For women, this means facing a return to a time when our gender—our very gender—was considered a pre-existing condition. Before the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies could discriminate against women of child-bearing age. They could charge outrageous rates for birth control and contraceptives. Under the ACA, women have secure access to care before, during, and after their pregnancies. They can no longer be charged outrageous rates simply for having a child or be denied access to mental health services if they suffer from postpartum depression. Women can now receive free contraceptive care, like birth control pills and IUDs. But now the President and Republicans in Congress are determined to drag us backward, all in the name of giving the richest Americans a huge tax cut.

Let's be really clear on this. The poorest, oldest, and the most sick people in our country are going to suffer so that the richest people in our country can get a huge tax cut under this bill. We need to do everything we can to fight against all these misguided efforts.

Although we haven't seen the likely monstrosity currently being hatched in secret, we have a pretty good idea of what is going to be in this bill. In the House version of TrumpCare, States have the ability to opt out of the Affordable Care Act's essential health benefits, which include access to birth control, pregnancy, and mental health coverage.

One Republican Congressman even had the audacity to say he shouldn't have to subsidize pregnancy care because he can't get pregnant. How the heck do you think he even arrived on this Earth? I really think this is outrageous. This is an outrageous statement that speaks for itself.

The bill also makes good on a long-standing Republican promise to defund Planned Parenthood, regardless of the cost in lives. Over the past few years, Republicans in Congress have tried everything they could think of to defund Planned Parenthood—passing stand-alone bills, attaching poison pills to must-pass bills, threatening a government shutdown, and passing TrumpCare in the House. In March, the majority leader held the floor open for over an hour to allow the Vice President time to travel to the Capitol to break a tie to repeal a regulation on title X funding meant to preserve access to Federal family planning services.

I understand that many of my friends on the other side of the aisle have strong feelings about abortion, but I have never been able to understand how this translates into attacking an organization that uses no Federal funds to provide abortions. In fact, Planned Parenthood uses its Federal funding to provide low-cost healthcare to the people in our country who need it most but who can't afford it.

In 2014 alone, Planned Parenthood provided over 600,000 cancer screenings

and over 4 million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections. These are real facts, not alternative facts.

I have heard from hundreds of my constituents over the past 6 months about how important Planned Parenthood is to them, and I would like to share a few of their stories.

Tiffany from Honolulu made her first visit to Planned Parenthood when she was 21, under unexpected circumstances during a pregnancy scare. She felt that having a child at that time in her life would be extremely difficult and would have negatively impacted her ability to finish school. During her visit to the clinic, Tiffany took a pregnancy test and discovered she wasn't pregnant. Her caregivers were then able to counsel Tiffany about her sexual health without judgment. They walked her through the different options she had and administered an STD test. She left the clinic with a prescription for birth control.

Kim, a young attorney from my State, recently wrote to my office to tell her story about turning to Planned Parenthood when she faced an unexpected pregnancy. After having a safe and open conversation with the staff at her local Planned Parenthood, Kim decided she was not ready to have a baby and ended her pregnancy. Planned Parenthood gave her the space and opportunity to make the best decision for her. As she recounted to us, "You don't have to like someone's choice, but you don't get to take away their freedom to make it."

The fight against TrumpCare continues, but I am going to do everything I can to protect women's health and their right to control their bodies—to control our bodies.

I urge my colleagues to oppose any measure in TrumpCare that takes women back to the days when our very gender was considered a preexisting condition.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Hawaii for her words and Senator MURRAY for organizing this group of speakers.

I rise today to join my colleagues in making clear that TrumpCare would be a disaster for women in New Hampshire and across the Nation.

Right now Senate Republicans continue to meet behind closed doors on their TrumpCare bill, and the reason they have not been transparent is because they know they can't defend this dangerous bill to their constituents. Throughout the process in the Senate, it has been a group of 13 men—no women—writing a bill that will impact the healthcare of millions of American women. It is not just that a small group has been writing the bill behind closed doors. It is also that once we do eventually see the bill, it is going to be rushed to the floor without a hearing. So we will not have the benefit of feed-

back from our constituents, from stakeholders, from people who understand what the impact of this bill will be. This is simply unacceptable.

To compete economically on a level playing field, women must be able to make their own healthcare decisions. They shouldn't have to pay more than men do for their healthcare. They should be able to visit providers of their own choice who understand and have expertise in women's healthcare needs. The health insurance that is available to women should be equal to that of their male colleagues. That means it should cover their basic healthcare needs.

To fully participate not only in our economy but also in our democracy, women have to be recognized for their capacity to make their own healthcare decisions—just as men are.

I have heard from many constituents whose lives have been changed by being able to get the healthcare they need from the providers they trust. One of those people is Carla from Newfields, NH. As a college student, Carla suffered from significant pain. She needed immediate medical care, so she went to her local Planned Parenthood.

It turned out that her pain was caused by ovarian cysts, and the treatment for those cysts was birth control. As a college student on a limited budget, before the Affordable Care Act had passed, Carla couldn't afford birth control. Because she went to Planned Parenthood, though, she got the treatment she needed at a price she could afford. Her pain went away. She was able to graduate college and eventually start a family—something she might not have been able to do if her underlying condition had not been treated, caught when it was. That was the power of access to appropriate and affordable health care in her life at the right time.

Carla's story is the story of the thousands of New Hampshire women who received primary and preventive healthcare services from Planned Parenthood.

TrumpCare is a disaster for women. TrumpCare defunds Planned Parenthood, which would take away a critical source of care for women. This care includes birth control and breast and cervical cancer screenings. Defunding Planned Parenthood would leave many women in the Granite State and throughout the country without access to care, plain and simple. There aren't enough other providers, as I heard from medical providers throughout my State when I was Governor there, to absorb all of the patients Planned Parenthood cares for now.

TrumpCare also includes harmful language that restricts women's constitutionally protected rights to access abortion services. Additionally, under TrumpCare, if you are a mother, giving birth could now be considered a preexisting condition that insurance companies could use to discriminate against you and charge you more.

TrumpCare would increase the cost to women from maternity care in two ways:

First, it would undermine the requirement that insurance companies must cover essential health benefits, including maternity care. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office says that the House-passed TrumpCare bill would increase out-of-pocket spending for maternity care for women who have private insurance by thousands of dollars per year.

Second, TrumpCare slashes Medicaid funding. Medicaid pays for nearly one-half of all births in the United States, meaning, with the 25-percent cut in expenditures over the next decade that is called for in the TrumpCare bill, that at least some of this maternity coverage would also be cut.

Any cut to Medicaid would disproportionately affect Granite State women, as 62 percent of Medicaid recipients in New Hampshire are women. These cuts would also strain at-risk families because Medicaid covers nearly one in three children across our country and nearly 30 percent of the children in my State of New Hampshire.

It is clear that TrumpCare would continue efforts to play partisan games with a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions and control her own destiny.

It is critical that people in New Hampshire and across our Nation continue to speak out and share their stories about how TrumpCare would impact their lives, and I am going to continue to work with my colleagues to defeat this bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am very pleased to follow my colleague from New Hampshire, Senator HASSAN. She said it very well. This is an extraordinarily important part of the debate.

A Senate vote on TrumpCare is now days away, and that is the case even though the bill remains hidden in the Senate shadows. I am here tonight with my colleagues to try to shine some light on the extraordinary harm TrumpCare is going to do to women's health across the country and also to call on the American people to stand up and say, and say loudly, that this is wrong—wrong because it would be a partisan process that takes away important healthcare rights from women across this country.

First, TrumpCare says that health insurance in America ought to be based on what men need and what women need ought to cost extra. You look back a few years to when the Affordable Care Act set in stone guaranteed insurance benefits to protect everybody who shops on the open market, the private open market, regardless of their gender, no price gouging women just because they are women. Now, however, the Republican plan lets States hack away at those essential

health benefits, and it always seems that maternity care is the first benefit that then gets cut.

If TrumpCare goes through, what will happen in America is insurance companies will carve maternity care out of the plans they offer on the open market. It would, in effect, become an add-on—an add-on that would come with a higher price, as if a pregnant women's healthcare is a luxury item like a sun-roof on a new car.

Let's set aside the fact that every man in the country was born to a woman. My colleagues on the other side have spent 7 years telling Americans that they were laser-focused on bringing costs down for everybody. Apparently, that notion of "everybody" that we are hearing from Republican Senators doesn't include mothers because their costs are going to be going up in a number of instances.

Second, the public has heard time and time again that nobody would be hurt under TrumpCare and that repeal and replace is all about putting the patient at the center of care. Tell that to the hundreds of thousands of women who will lose their right to see the doctor of their choosing as a result of TrumpCare defunding Planned Parenthood. Just unpack that for a moment. I think one basic, almost sacred principle for women is that they ought to be able to make the choice of the physician they trust for their healthcare. Yet what we are talking about here—apparently tomorrow—is a real prospect that women will lose the right to see the doctor they trust.

This ideological campaign against Planned Parenthood ignores the fact that there are already laws on the books that prevent tax dollars from funding abortions. It ignores the fact that Planned Parenthood doesn't get a dime of taxpayer funding above what is available to other comparable healthcare providers. It ignores the fact that women rely on Planned Parenthood to get routine medical care from the doctors they know and trust—basic checkups, cancer screenings, preventive care, HIV tests.

It is long past time to end this crusade against Planned Parenthood, which is taking away from women in this country the ability to make their own judgments about whom they want to see and the doctors they trust.

Finally, the TrumpCare plan would significantly slash Medicaid, and this is a special threat to women. Medicaid is at the heart of women's healthcare in the country. Women live longer than men on average, and Medicaid helps pay for two out of three seniors living in nursing homes. Women are more likely than men to have a disability, and Medicaid is the key to helping millions of Americans with disabilities live successful, independent lives in their communities. The Republican healthcare plan would slash Medicaid so deeply year after year that States would be forced to cut benefits and access to care. Women would be hit the hardest by those cuts.

The public needs to know that right now, it is go time in America on healthcare. This vote is right around the corner. And because my colleagues on the other side have in effect locked into this "our way or the highway" approach—the Washington word for it is "reconciliation," and my guess is that in a lot of coffee shops in North Carolina and Oregon and points in between, people aren't that up on Washington lingo like reconciliation, but they really want Democrats and Republicans to work together. That has been the cornerstone of my work with respect to healthcare. That is what Chairman HATCH and I have done with respect to the transformation of Medicare, to update the Medicare guarantee. I have worked with my colleagues in a bipartisan way in terms of independence at home, more care for older people at home, and on a host of issues, particularly with respect to holding down pharmaceutical costs in a bipartisan way. The reality is, that is the only way you come up with approaches that are sustainable—build on principles that both sides feel strongly about and lock it into a bipartisan agreement.

What we are looking at, again, not in 6 weeks but tomorrow, is the Senate Republicans saying: We are going to use this reconciliation—not the bipartisan approaches that I think yield the real dividends but a partisan approach. It is called reconciliation. It means "It is our way or the highway." And then what you are going to do is you are going to have one of the most consequential debates about domestic policy in decades. It is going to fly through the Senate with hardly any public input and debate.

A big part of what I wanted to do tonight is come to the floor of the Senate to say to Americans that this is the time to get loud, to get very loud and to tell your friends and your neighbors and your relatives to get out there and be loud with you. This isn't some mundane debate where the two sides couldn't square their differences, the kind most people choose to ignore; this is an out-and-out attack on the healthcare of millions of Americans and especially women.

I think that when the facts get out to women in this country, they are going to say this is wrong, and they are going to say this is personal. The people in Washington, DC, talk about lots of things and throw around lots of Washington lingo like "reconciliation," but I think they are going to see through exactly what these proposals mean for them. It is a significant rollback of their rights on matters like being able to choose the doctor they trust.

I will close with this, and I have felt this way since the days when I was co-director of the senior citizens at home in Oregon. Political change hardly ever is top-down—top being it comes from government buildings and then trickles down to people—it is almost always bottoms-up, where the voices of Americans are heard and they tell their

elected officials when they are off base, when they are doing something that will hurt them rather than help them.

I close by way of saying that I hope this has provided at least some useful information so Americans—particularly women—can get engaged, get loud, and do it now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I note my colleague is prepared to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am proud and honored to follow my colleague from Oregon who has been such a steadfast leader when it comes to our Nation's healthcare and insurance and particularly when it comes to women's healthcare. I have been really proud to stand side by side with him, Senator MURRAY, and other colleagues who have been here today.

I must say, sometimes on the floor of the Senate, at this hour of the day or night, we can feel alone, as though no one is listening, but I know millions of Americans are listening because of the voices like my colleague Senator WYDEN. I would join him in urging our fellow Americans to make their voices heard, to be loud, and we are going to be loud in Connecticut this Friday, at 1:30 in the afternoon, when I continue the emergency field hearing we began on Monday, giving the people of Connecticut an opportunity to make their voices and their faces known, seen, and heard because, unfortunately, that opportunity has been denied by a process that has been secretive and hasty. Secrecy and speed are a toxic recipe for any democracy. They can disguise deception and mistakes.

I am here to call attention to one of the profoundly mistaken courses that this new bill is expected to take. There is no doubt in my mind that the Republican bill will contain language to defund one of the most respected and accessible and significant of our healthcare providers in the United States; namely, Planned Parenthood.

I have been an advocate of women's healthcare and reproductive rights and choice since my days as a law clerk for Justice Blackmun in the 1970s. Our Nation has made progress—halting and sometimes it steps back—but Planned Parenthood has helped to improve, enduringly and profoundly, women's healthcare.

In my home State of Connecticut, Planned Parenthood has 17 sites and services for more than 60,000 women and men, and they have been covered by the Medicaid Program. That coverage will be decimated under the measure we expect to see. Defunding these clinics could do irreparable damage to the communities that Planned Parenthood clinics serve.

As a nurse practitioner at Planned Parenthood in Southern Connecticut told me, patients trust the services they receive at Planned Parenthood because they rely on them, and they know Planned Parenthood clinics have

one interest and only one interest in mind, which is the well-being of their patients and clients. Planned Parenthood has, therefore, expanded into primary care. Not only does Amina provide family planning services and STI and cancer screenings, she now screens for and treats patients for chronic medical conditions that disproportionately impact low-income patients, such as depression, diabetes, asthma, and hypertension.

In her clinic, my friend who is a nurse practitioner there, Amina, has seen her primary care practice grow from 8 patients initially to 112 a few months later. Her clinic offers these services, in addition to the contraceptive services that are so important to many patients. Patients who will simply go unseen and uncared for have this care at Planned Parenthood, but they will not have it if Planned Parenthood is defunded.

In Connecticut, other kinds of healthcare providers, like health centers and hospitals, would need to increase their capacity to provide contraceptive care, and they would have to increase it by 228 percent to overcome the care deficit left by defunding Planned Parenthood. With these craven attempts to immediately and completely defund Planned Parenthood as a part of TrumpCare—really TrumpCare 2.0—it will be even more challenging for so many women to get the healthcare they need and deserve.

Defunding of Planned Parenthood also jeopardizes gains our Nation made for women of color and patients who are served in areas where there are few, if any, other options.

Planned Parenthood centers and clinics are nothing short of a lifeline for quality healthcare in the underserved communities. The fact is, the Affordable Care Act has worked for women and particularly women of color. Planned Parenthood and other women's healthcare providers are an integral part of that success story, but it isn't only women of color, it isn't only women in underserved communities, and it isn't only women. It is families who have benefited—men, women, and children—because the quality of healthcare and preventive healthcare, particularly, has been raised immeasurably.

To decimate that network of care would be profoundly destructive to our Nation. I hope my colleagues will think again before they side with the forces of degrading and demeaning women who seek those protections. We need a national effort and appreciation to make sure our conscience prevails because the repeal of these provisions would mean they are gone, and all women—including healthy women—will see insurance costs rise. It is absolutely clear to me that the Affordable Care Act repeal would be cruel. It would be mean and most particularly to the women who depend on Planned Parenthood for so many of the services that help them and their families.

I hope my Republican colleagues will cease to ignore and deny these benefits. We stand ready to work with them to improve the Affordable Care Act, not to repeal it, not to decimate or destroy it, to improve it, to mend its defects, to preserve Planned Parenthood, to make sure the women of America and their families have the healthcare they need and deserve.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am joining my colleagues on the floor this afternoon because I share their concerns about what will happen to women's healthcare. I am concerned about what will happen to everyone's healthcare, but particularly this afternoon we are talking about our concerns with respect to healthcare for women.

If the Senate passes legislation like the House passed recently—the American Health Care Act—that legislation has been widely described as cruel and poorly crafted. Just last week, President Trump described it simply as mean. Republican leaders in the Senate are now writing a companion bill that reportedly makes mostly cosmetic changes to the House bill. By some accounts, it would make the House bill even more extreme.

Obviously, any legislation that, by design, takes health insurance away from tens of millions of Americans, I believe, is deeply misguided. I am particularly concerned about the harmful effects this legislation would have on women's health. Indeed, I received countless emails and letters from women who are offended that, once again, powerful men are meeting behind closed doors to make critical decisions regarding women's health, and we have been excluded from the room.

This Republican bill would take us back to the days before the Affordable Care Act, when insurers could charge women more just for being women, with no other reason needed. It would take away the Federal protections against discrimination based on pre-existing conditions. Bear in mind, some of these conditions apply mostly or exclusively to women.

In the days before the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies treated pregnancies, sexual assault, domestic violence, and cesarean sections as pre-existing conditions. Insurers routinely charged higher premiums to women with these “preexisting conditions” or they denied coverage all together. For example, more than 30 percent of mothers have a cesarean section. Once again, if this House-passed bill passes, and if we see something out of the Senate that does the same, women would face discrimination, mothers would face discrimination from insurance companies.

The American Health Care Act would also harm women by allowing insurers to opt out of the 10 essential health benefits that all insurance plans must cover under the Affordable Care Act.

These benefits are called essential because that is exactly what they are. They are essential, not only to good health but, in some cases, to actually staying alive. A number of these essential health benefits apply exclusively to women, including contraception, maternity and newborn care, mammograms, and cervical cancer screenings.

Several months ago on Facebook, I asked people across New Hampshire to tell me their stories—stories about how the Affordable Care Act has made life-saving difference or otherwise improved their lives. I heard from many women across New Hampshire who have written about how the Affordable Care Act has ended discrimination against them by the health insurance industry because of their gender. In particular, they are grateful that the Affordable Care Act includes maternity care and contraception.

This is a picture of Maura Fay, of Exeter, NH. She writes:

My husband and I are self-employed. Before the ACA we were paying rates that were simply unsustainable for a middle-class family like ours. When I was pregnant in 2013, we were forced to pay a maternity rider of an additional \$822 a month.

That is in addition to her premium. She says:

I'm worried about the rollbacks in regulations around Essential Health Benefits, especially since so many of them impact women. Maternity coverage shouldn't come with an additional \$800 a month price tag.

Well, I appreciate that letter from Maura, but I am worried she may actually be underestimating the cost of maternity care coverage if the Affordable Care Act is repealed. According to one analysis, women who seek maternity care under the American Health Care Act—the legislation passed by the House—could pay up to \$17,000 in surcharges to their insurance company.

The American Health Care Act that the House passed also makes draconian cuts to Medicaid, and this will disproportionately harm women—nearly 40 million women—who make up the majority of Medicaid beneficiaries. Medicaid provides healthcare for nearly half of all pregnant women in the United States, supporting them through their pregnancies and ensuring that their babies get a healthy start in life. This coverage is directly threatened by the Republican legislation.

The American Health Care Act the House passed, if we combine that with the administration's budget proposal, it would cut Medicaid by a staggering \$1.4 trillion by the year 2027—so, in 10 years, a \$1.4 trillion cut. This would reduce Medicaid funding by nearly half and mean that tens of millions of people would lose coverage, including many women of reproductive age.

Let me also point out that both the American Health Care Act passed by the House and the President's budget terminate all Federal funding for Planned Parenthood, and we just heard Senator BLUMENTHAL speak eloquently about the importance of Planned Parenthood. This would leave millions of

women and families with fewer healthcare options. In New Hampshire, it would mean that between 12,000 and 13,000 women and men would lose access to basic primary and preventive health services, including lifesaving cancer screenings and HIV testing.

According to poll after poll, the American people all across the political spectrum strongly support Planned Parenthood and oppose efforts to defund it. Despite efforts by Republican leaders in the House and Senate to misrepresent the facts, Planned Parenthood does not use taxpayer dollars to fund abortions. Indeed, Federal law expressly forbids the use of Federal funds to pay for abortions except under extremely narrow circumstances that have been agreed to by Congress, so the real issue here is not abortion. This is about ensuring that American women have access to the basic healthcare they need where they want to receive it. Remember that Planned Parenthood plays an especially important role in delivering essential health services to low-income, uninsured, and vulnerable individuals, including in rural areas.

Earlier this year I received a letter from Samantha Fox of Bow, NH, and she writes:

In 2007, I was a 19-year-old just barely starting out when I was denied health insurance due to a preexisting condition. Had I been able to access affordable coverage, my preexisting condition, a reproductive system

disorder, would have been easily manageable. . . . [A]t that time, I was able to access care through Planned Parenthood which likely preserved my ability to conceive in the future. Flash forward 10 years: I am expecting my first child and I have coverage which, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, includes prenatal care.

Now, here in Washington, some people think that repealing the Affordable Care Act is all about politics and notching a win on their scoreboard. But for ordinary people in New Hampshire and across the country, including millions of women, repealing the Affordable Care Act isn't about politics, it is about life and death. We need to listen to the women and men in each of our States whose lives and finances would be turned upside down if the Affordable Care Act is repealed.

Furthermore, it is just wrong to exclude women, to exclude their colleagues, to exclude Democrats, to exclude the public and to pursue a strictly partisan approach to healthcare—the same approach that produced a terrible bill in the House. And it is deeply misguided to bring legislation to the floor that we all know would hurt tens of millions of Americans and do particular harm to women.

There is a better way forward in the Senate. Let's put ideology and partisanship aside. Let's work together. Let's strengthen the elements of the Affordable Care Act that are working

in the real world, including Medicaid expansion, and let's fix what is not working. It doesn't matter what we call this. It doesn't have to be called ObamaCare. We can call it whatever we want. The important thing is to have legislation that would provide access to healthcare for Americans, healthcare they can afford, that is quality, that is there when people need it. This is what the great majority of the American people want us to do. It is time now to respect their wishes. Let's strengthen the Affordable Care Act so that it works even better for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 11 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:49 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, June 22, 2017, at 11 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate Wednesday, June 21, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
SIGAL MANDELKER, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR TERRORISM AND FINANCIAL CRIMES.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATING THE SOUTH
CALLAWAY BULLDOGS' BASE-
BALL TEAM

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the South Callaway Bulldogs' Baseball Team for their 2017 Missouri Class 3 Baseball State Championship.

This team includes Adam Albaugh, Austin Loucks, BJ Moffat, Braden Lallier, Caleb Hall, Clayton Knipfel, Cole Shoemaker, Devin Borghardt, Drake Davidson, Dustin Loucks, Dylan Lepper, Grayson Peneston, Jerod Mistler, Josh Johnson, Kaden Helsel, Landon Horstman, Nickalas Mealy, Nicolas Moffat, Peyton Leeper, Treysen Gray, Tyklen Salmos, Tyler Lepper, and their coach, Heath Lepper. They should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the South Callaway Bulldogs' Baseball Team for a job well done.

IN RECOGNITION OF JAMES W.
HUGHES, PH.D.

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize James W. Hughes, Ph.D. as he prepares to step down as Dean of the Edward J. Blaustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey on July 1, 2017. Although he is stepping down as Dean after over 20 years of leadership, Dr. Hughes will continue as a professor at the University. His long-standing dedication and remarkable achievements throughout his distinguished career are to be celebrated.

Dr. Hughes' tenure as Dean of the Edward J. Blaustein School of Planning and Public Policy began in 1995 and since that time, he has overseen the awarding of over 5,300 degrees to the school's graduates. Under his leadership, the Edward J. Blaustein School of Planning and Public Policy continues to be a preeminent institution for understanding and advancing the interconnectivity of urban planning and public health. Dr. Hughes has been a leading voice on sustainable development, demographics, housing and economics, advising lawmakers on policies that would improve the well-being of our communities.

Dr. Hughes holds a master's degree in city and regional planning and a doctorate in urban planning and policy development. He

began his professional career as an engineer and joined the Rutgers University faculty in 1971. His experience and expertise has earned him several appointments to various state boards and commissions including the Governor's Commission on Jobs, Growth and Economic Development and the Governor's World Class Economy Task Force, among others.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in thanking James Hughes for his ongoing service to Rutgers University and the state of New Jersey. Dr. Hughes' commitment to the betterment of our communities is truly deserving of this body's recognition.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, I missed votes because my flight was cancelled and the next one available arrived after votes. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on H.R. 2847, Roll Call No. 309, and Yea on H.R. 2866, Roll Call No. 310.

CONGRATULATING HERMANN HIGH
SCHOOL BEARCATS BOYS GOLF
TEAM

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Hermann High School Bearcats Boys Golf Team on their first place win in the 2017 Class 2 Missouri State Golf Tournament.

This team includes Andrew Budnik, Justin Grosse, Matthew Heidger, Thomas Henson, Ross Henson, and their coach, Jeremy Hosick. They should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Hermann High School Bearcats Boys Golf Team on a job well done.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES B. RENACCI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I missed votes on Roll Call No. 309 and No. 310. Had I been

present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call No. 309 and Yea on Roll Call No. 310.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALL-
EN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER ARMY
FIRST SERGEANT (1SG) NICH-
OLAS BARTON II

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of First Sergeant (1SG) Nicholas Robert Barton II who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on June 7, 2010, during Operation Enduring Freedom. 1SG Barton was killed when his military vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device in Konar, Afghanistan. Sergeant (SGT) Joshua A. Lukeala, Specialist (SPC) Matthew R. Catlett, Specialist (SPC) Charles S. Jirtle, and Specialist (SPC) Blaine E. Redding was also killed.

1SG Barton was assigned to the Company A, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) of Fort Campbell, Kentucky. 1SG Barton gave 16 years of devoted service to the Army.

1SG Barton, a Roxie, Mississippi native, was 35 years old at the time of death. He graduated from Franklin High School in 1993, where he played center on the football team.

According to the McComb Enterprise-Journal, his grandmother, Jo Beth Coleman said, "He was a good student and a real likable person. Everybody loves him".

He was awarded three Bronze Star Medals; the Purple Heart Medal; the Meritorious Service Medal; three Army Commendation Medals; three Army Achievement Medals; the Meritorious Unit Commendation; two Army Superior Unit Awards; five Army Good Conduct Medals; two National Defense Service Medals; the Iraq Campaign Medal; the Afghanistan Campaign Medal; the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; two Armed Forces Service Medals; the Army Service Ribbon; three Overseas Ribbons; the NATO Medal; the Drill Sergeant Identification Badge; the Army Ranger Tab; the Combat Infantry Badge; the Expert Infantry Badge; the Parachutist Badge, the Pathfinder Badge; the Air Assault badge and the Weapons Qualification: M4, (expert).

1SG Barton is survived by his wife, Rebecca Barton, his stepson Jason Wells, his parents, SSG Robert N. Barton (retired) and Dona Lee Barton, his maternal grandmother, Patricia Paugh, and his paternal grandparents, Nathaniel and Jo Beth Coleman.

1SG Barton's sacrifice for our freedoms will always be remembered.

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

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

CONGRATULATING THE JEFFERSON CITY JAYS' BASEBALL TEAM

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Jefferson City Jays' Baseball Team for their 2017 Missouri Class 5 Baseball State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Jefferson City Jays' Baseball Team for a job well done.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes Tuesday, June 20, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call votes 309 and 310.

HONORING ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL BILL ATHANAS AFTER 51 YEARS AS A NEW HAMPSHIRE

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mr. Bill Athanas, who retires today after serving New Hampshire communities for 51 years, 21 years at Inter Lakes High school and 30 years at Franklin High School.

His commitment to students and the community goes beyond simply being a Vice Principal. Bill could be found every morning, rain, snow, or shine, outside Inter Lakes High School with a cup of coffee in hand greeting and welcoming students, as well as catching up with parents. Along with lifting spirits, through his genuine and sunny disposition, Bill attended every event in which his students participated in, always encouraging and cheering them on.

Bill's legacy will read that he tirelessly worked to give every single student the guidance and support needed to succeed, and a warm sincere smile when they most needed it. His plans for retirement include his passion for community service, he will be returning to Franklin High School as a volunteer. We thank Bill for his service to our students and to the community.

CONGRATULATING ANNA VOLLET OF THE HELIAS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL LADY CRUSADERS

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Anna Vollet of the Helias Catholic High School Lady Crusaders on her second place finish at the 2017 Class 4 Missouri Track and Field State Championship in the 200-meter sprint.

Anna and her coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for Anna's success at the State Championship.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Anna Vollet of the Helias Catholic High School Lady Crusaders for a job well done.

IN MEMORY OF DR. BILL BARTON

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, June 17, 2017, a funeral service was conducted at Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Irmo, South Carolina, for Dr. Bill Barton, the church's founding pastor. The Church is an extraordinary institution of the dynamic community, one of the fastest growing in America.

The service was lovingly carried out by Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Dale B. Welden, Director of Worship and Arts Rev. Marc Rattray, Rev. Dan Ratchford of Smyrna Presbyterian Church in Newberry, South Carolina, Organist Sharon Rattray, and Pianist Allison Hilbish. Pallbearers were members of the Irmo Police Department where Dr. Barton served as Chaplain.

The following thoughtful obituary was included in the service program:

Dr. Whaley Seignious Barton, Jr. (Bill), 76, passed away on June 12, 2017, at Richland Memorial Hospital in Columbia, South Carolina, surrounded by his family. He was born on May 5, 1941, in Miami, Florida, to Whaley Seignious Barton Sr., of Orangeburg, South Carolina, and Helen Monroe Barton of Houston, Texas.

Whaley (Bill) faithfully served the Lord as pastor of many churches and, for nineteen years, was the founding pastor of Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church in Irma, South Carolina. After retiring, he went on to begin Ministry Resources Team.

Whaley married Linda Lee Barnes of Miami, Florida, October 22, 1961. They were happily married for 55 years. He is survived by his daughter Kathryn and husband Ray of Texas, his son Steve and wife Mary of South Carolina, daughter-in-law Melissa Barton Prim of South Carolina, thirteen grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

Whaley was preceded in death by his parents, brother George, and son, Whaley S. Barton III.

RECOGNIZING WORLD REFUGEE DAY

HON. ADRIANO ESPAILLAT

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize World Refugee Day and to stand in solidarity with refugees from around the world.

June 20th is an opportunity to recognize the millions of people from across the globe who have been forced to uproot their lives due to armed conflict and persecution. We honor their sacrifice and courage when displaced in seeking safety for themselves and their families.

In particular, I would like to recognize African Services Committee, Inc. an award-winning multiservice agency in Harlem that was founded by Ethiopian Refugees in 1981. Asfaha Hadera founded the agency in his basement in the Bronx after fleeing Ethiopia for refugee camps in Sudan and then emigrating to the U.S. He saw the need for refugee services from conflicted areas in Africa and established the organization, along with Kim Nichols.

Each year, the center assists 12,500 immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from across the African Diaspora with health, housing, legal, educational, and social services. The staff comes from 20 countries and speaks over 25 languages, providing access to the ethnically diverse communities that live in Harlem and the Bronx. African Services Committee also works on HIV prevention and access to AIDS treatment in five HIV clinics across Ethiopia. I am proud of the work that this organization is doing to support refugees in New York's thirteenth district.

Contrary to these services, Trump issued a travel ban from six Muslim-majority countries as one of his first executive orders in March. This action was discriminatory and opposite of our American values.

On this World Refugee Day, let us remember the words on our dear Statue of Liberty, "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses." That's who we are as Americans. We are a country that welcomes the poorest and most vulnerable among us, and I urge my colleagues to join me.

CONGRATULATING GANNON WITHERS OF THE NEW BLOOMFIELD WILDCATS

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Gannon Withers of the New Bloomfield Wildcats for his second place finish in the 2017 Missouri Class 1 Boys Individual Golf State Championship.

Gannon and his coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the team state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Gannon Withers of the New Bloomfield Wildcats for a job well done.

EMMA ALBERT

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Emma Albert for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Emma Albert is a student at Drake Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Emma Albert is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Emma Albert for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

JESSE KATZEFF

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jesse Katzeff of Naples, Florida, who has just recently earned the Congressional Gold Medal Award.

The Gold Medal award program presents an opportunity for young people to set and achieve challenging goals that build character and foster growth. It demands a significant time commitment of several hundred hours devoted to community service, personal development and physical fitness.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor Congress may bestow upon a young civilian. This year, Jesse Katzeff is one of just 373 young people from across 39 states to have earned it.

Jesse volunteered with Teen Court and the Sheriff's Department while also completing two summer internships at a local museum. This allowed him to learn more about his community while devoting his time for the benefit of others. Jesse learned to fly a plane while taking part in the Civil Air Program for nearly 5 years. Additionally, he competed on a local swim team while also improving his physical fitness with CrossFit. He chose to go hiking in the mountains of West Virginia, giving him the opportunity to learn more about himself while outside of his comfort zone.

The Congressional Gold Medal Award program has allowed Jesse to lay a foundation of engagement, determination and fortitude that will serve him immensely well going forward. I congratulate Jesse on this truly extraordinary honor, and wish him the best of luck as he continues to grow and advance in life.

IN HONOR OF LUCY DIGGS SLOWE

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize an extraordinary leader of women, Lucy Diggs Stowe, who has recently been honored by the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., an international sorority that she helped establish at Howard University in 1908. The ceremony took place in Berryville, the place of her birth, located in the 10th Congressional District of Virginia.

In the early part of the 20th Century, Lucy Diggs Slowe was an inspirational advocate for greater opportunity for African-American women, whose resourcefulness and resilience is reflective of the dynamic Josephine Street community where she spent her early childhood. The difficult loss of both of her parents in her youth and the obstacle of a segregated education in Virginia and Maryland did not stop Lucy Slowe from blossoming as a student and achieving greatness as an educator. Graduating second in her class from Baltimore Colored School in 1904, she was admitted to Howard University in Washington, D.C. and after graduating from Howard as class valedictorian in 1908, Lucy Diggs Slowe embarked on a stellar career as an educator, overcoming obstacles and breaking down barriers as she went. In chronological order, she taught high school English in Baltimore, studied at Columbia University during the summers and obtained a master's degree in 1915, was invited to create and lead the first junior high school for African-American students in the District of Columbia, was selected by Howard University as its first Dean of Women in 1922, and served in administrative positions at Howard for the next 15 years.

To ensure a prominent role for African-American women at traditionally black colleges, Lucy Diggs Slowe helped organize and served as the first president of the National Association of College Women, an organization dedicated to raising the standards in colleges for African-American women, developing women faculty, and securing scholarships. Slowe's passion for excellence extended beyond education to the sport of tennis, as well. In 1917, she became the first African-American woman to win a national title in any sport, when she claimed the first women's title at the American Tennis Association's national tournament in Baltimore.

While an undergraduate student at Howard, Lucy Diggs Slowe was one of nine founders of Alpha Kappa Alpha, the nation's first Greek-letter organization for African-American women and served as its first president. More than a century later, the international sorority has grown to more than 290,000 members in 997 chapters in 42 states, the District of Columbia and several U.S. territories and foreign countries. With the purpose of raising the status of African-Americans, particularly girls and women, the sorority's corps of volunteers has championed life-long learning and instituted social action initiatives and social service programs that have transformed communities for the better.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and our colleagues join me in honoring the extraordinary life and contributions of Lucy Diggs Slowe, a

favorite daughter of Berryville, Virginia and recognizing and thanking Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., for 109 years, of proudly and successfully working to raise the status of African-American girls and women.

EMMA BUZBEE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Emma Buzbee for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Emma Buzbee is a student at Pomona High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Emma Buzbee is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Emma Buzbee for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF MS.
LISA S. DISBROW**HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO**

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Lisa Disbrow. Over the last 32 years, Ms. Disbrow has had a distinguished career in public and military service culminating with her recent assignment as Acting Secretary of the Air Force, where she was responsible for organizing, training, equipping and providing for the welfare of approximately 660,000 active duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian Airmen and their families, world-wide.

Ms. Disbrow has given much to this Nation through her dedicated and selfless service. After graduation from the University of Virginia she answered the calling to join the Air Force. She served on active duty until 1992 in a variety of positions to include intelligence alert officer, Africa/Middle East military political analyst, and chief of electronic intelligence analysis. She deployed in support of Operations Desert Storm and Southern Watch and was selected for the Defense Intelligence Agency's Advanced Language and Area Studies.

After Desert Storm, Ms. Disbrow transitioned to the Air Force Reserve, and accepted a civilian position as a senior systems engineer for the National Reconnaissance Office. In that capacity, she helped develop programs and requirements to improve national intelligence support to tactical users, including operational and analytical systems.

From 1995 to 2014, Ms. Disbrow held a variety of positions on the Joint Staff as a senior civilian, including the Joint Staff Vice Director

for Force Structure, Resources and Assessment. She was responsible for developing joint warfighting requirements, advising on force assignments to combatant commanders, conducting force structure and warfighting studies, and evaluations defense plans, programs and strategies for the Chairman of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council.

While assigned to the Joint Staff, Ms. Disbrow was detailed to the President's National Security Advisor as the Special Advisor for Policy Implementation and Execution at the White House. She assisted in planning and implementing the National Security Strategy and advised the White House on issues across the federal government.

Her twenty-three years of uniformed service culminated in 2008 when she retired as a Colonel from the Air Force Reserve while serving as Special Assistant to the Director of Programs, Headquarters Air Force.

In 2014, Ms. Disbrow was confirmed by the Senate as the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller, the principal senior official on all financial matters. She was responsible for financial policy, management, execution of an annual budget of over \$130 billion, workforce development for over 10,000 financial managers world-wide, and providing analytic support services. She directed the development of the five-year programming plan, prepared for the first congressionally-mandated audit, oversaw the Air Force Cost Analysis Agency and led accounting and financial operations.

Prior to assuming the duties of Acting Secretary of the Air Force, Ms. Disbrow served as the twenty-fifth Under Secretary of the Air Force. As Under Secretary, her leadership enabled the successful roll-out of the Long Range Strike Bomber program, helped develop the first-ever analytic framework for space resiliency, effecting \$10 billion in acquisition programs, facilitated operational energy efficiencies resulting in over \$1 billion in savings, and successfully gained authorization to add over 10,000 new Airmen to the active duty force.

At the same time, Lisa also led efforts to better support Airmen suffering from invisible wounds of war by improving processes from injury diagnosis through reintegration with appreciation of the member's experience and care.

Finally, I also commend Ms. Disbrow's family for their service and support. Her husband, Harry, served as an Air Force Colonel and as a senior civilian in the Pentagon. Her two children, Stefanie and Derrick have remained supportive through the family's decades of service. Stefanie's husband T.J. is an honored serviceman serving two tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, and I would also like to acknowledge their two children, Parker and Brody. Our nation appreciates their unwavering support, service, and sacrifice throughout Ms. Disbrow's exemplary service.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. Disbrow and her family for their remarkable service to our nation. I wish Ms. Disbrow good luck and God-speed in her next chapter of life, and I look forward to their continued success.

RECOGNIZING ALBERT NAPOLI

HON. MIMI WALTERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, today, I recognize Mr. Albert Napoli's contributions to Orange County, California during his tenure as Chairman of the Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce. Over the course of the last year, Albert successfully represented the 15,000 businesses and industries that call Irvine, California home.

Local Chambers of Commerce support small businesses and encourage economic growth and vitality. A thriving local economy helps companies of all sizes grow and invest in their operations, which strengthens our communities.

I thank Albert for his work to strengthen and expand Irvine's business community. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

GRACE HUSKINSON

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Grace Huskinson for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Grace Huskinson is a student at Oberon Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Grace Huskinson is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Grace Huskinson for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF THE LATE HORACE NASH

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Master Sergeant (MSG) Horace Nash. MSG Nash died from injuries he sustained in a car accident on May 13, 2017. MSG Nash was well-known for his devotion to God, family and military service.

MSG Nash enjoyed playing sports growing up including football, baseball, and basketball. He excelled at all three. MSG Nash graduated from Carthage High School in 1996. The same year he enlisted in the Mississippi Army National Guard. During his 20 years of service, he deployed with Company A 150th Engineer Battalion, served as the Intelligence NCOIC

for the 168th Engineer Brigade, and was a member of the 150th Brigade Engineer Battalion. He divided his time between the Mississippi Army National Guard and PECO Foods in Sebastopol where he was employed.

MSG Nash's sister, Paula Nash-Hogan, says her younger brother's dream was to be in the military and to also serve as a police officer. He achieved both of those goals.

"He wasn't my only military brother, but he was my favorite military brother," Paula said. "I was like his second mom. I am extremely proud. From the scale of 1-10, it would be 100. I love him."

Mississippi Army National Guard SGT Greg Wells, a childhood friend, served with MSG Nash during a deployment to Iraq from July 2004 until January 2006. He says if there was one word to describe MSG Nash, it would be "tenacious."

"He was one of those guys you knew would make a mark in this world," Wells said. "Horace did everything right."

MSG Nash is survived by his wife, Nilah Nash; his mother, Annie Bell Nash; his children, Charmecia Nash, Jawaunya Nash, Madison Nash, Colton Nash, and Katelyn Nash; four stepchildren, Armando, Aveon, Amaron, and Azavier Hayes; three sisters, Shelia Nash, Paula (Stacey) Nash-Hogan, Wanda Dortch; three brothers, Marvin (Jacqueta) Nash, Robert (Ruth Ann), and Deonday (April) Nash; best friends/brothers, Kendall Hall, Desmond Reed, Jr., and Mashawn Leflore.

MSG Nash's devotion to serving our nation will always be remembered.

HONORING BRENT "RUDY" EDWARDS

HON. DWIGHT EVANS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a brave young man from West Philadelphia, Brent "Rudy" Edwards, a sophomore at Overbrook High School.

On Saturday, May 27, 2017, at approximately 10:30 am, a fire started inside of a toaster at a row home on the 1000 block of Flanders Road in the Overbrook section of Philadelphia. Eight family members were inside of the home at the time.

As the family escaped, they realized their 1-year-old relative, Bryce, was still inside as flames and smoke engulfed the home. That is when Edwards ran into the house, without hesitation, to rescue his 1-year-old nephew.

The house was overcome with smoke as Edwards ran in. He couldn't see anything but the flames as he searched frantically for his nephew. He called out for Bryce twice and received no answer. Suddenly, he heard a sound—the baby's cough. Edwards reached out, grabbed a tiny arm, and scooped up his nephew. Holding him close to his chest, Edwards staggered back outside, where he gave the baby to his mother and collapsed on the landing.

Edwards was taken to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and was treated for smoke inhalation. He was released the following day. As Edwards recovers, he is grateful that his baby nephew is alive and well.

The 2nd Congressional District of Pennsylvania extends best wishes to Edwards for his actions in the midst of a tragic event.

EMELIO MARQUEZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Emelio Marquez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Emelio Marquez is a student at Arvada High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Emelio Marquez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Emelio Marquez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

REMEMBERING JUNETEENTH

HON. ADRIANO ESPAILLAT

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, on June 19, 1865, the Emancipation Proclamation was read by U.S. Army Major Gordon Granger in Galveston, Texas to slaves who were unaware of the original issuance and reading by President Abraham Lincoln nearly two and a half years prior.

This day, referred to as Juneteenth, is historic and significant in American history and marks the date of freedom for the millions of slaves who were liberated.

This nation was built on the backs of African-Americans. And this Capitol and our White House, were literally built by the hands of slaves. It was only 152 years ago that Blacks in America were considered property and three-fifths a human. Juneteenth serves as a reminder of the atrocities faced by the African-American community.

In 2017, African-Americans are still discriminated against on an institutional basis. Black women in New York State take home \$0.66 on the dollar compared to white men. And unarmed black people are killed by police at five times the rate of unarmed whites.

Despite being enslaved for 245 years and then freed to struggle, African-Americans have accomplished so much. It is our duty to acknowledge the ugliness of this nation's history and remain steadfast in our efforts to ensure equity and equality for all individuals. While our country has made great strides in race and freedom, there is still much work that remains to be done.

IN HONOR OF DENNIS PATRICK
MULLINS**HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to commemorate the life of Mr. Dennis Patrick "Pat" Mullins, who passed away on May 28, 2017, at the age of 79. Throughout his life, Mr. Mullins was an esteemed leader in our community and a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. Revered for his ability to bring people together and beloved for his vibrant personality, charm, and great sense of humor, Mr. Mullins embodied the essence of a true conservative and a Virginia gentleman. Under his extraordinary leadership, the Republican Party of Virginia experienced a period of expansion and tremendous success, unparalleled in recent years. His legacy endures and he will always be remembered and missed by many.

Originally from St. Albans, West Virginia, Mr. Mullins earned his bachelor's degree from Columbia University in 1959, where he served as sports editor of the college daily newspaper, the Spectator. Later, he earned his law degree from George Washington University. In 1963, Mr. Mullins married his wife, Jackie, with whom he raised four children.

Mr. Mullins's illustrious political career spanned multiple decades and commenced with his role as the Fairfax County Republican Committee Chairman from 1990 to 1996. After moving to Central Virginia, he served as the Chairman of Louisa County Republican Committee from 2008 to 2009. Subsequently, he was elected as Chairman of the Republican Party of Virginia in 2009 and served until his retirement in 2015.

In addition to his political activism, Mr. Mullins was known for his fervent passion for therapeutic horseback riding and his dedication to our community and his family. He served as a member of the American Paint Horse Foundation's Board of Directors and served as a Rotary District Governor. Mr. Mullins also always cherished his family and in his later years often regaled his grandchildren with vivacious stories. Mr. Mullins leaves behind a remarkable legacy and an extensive career of service to our Commonwealth. He will be greatly missed by the countless lives he has touched. He is survived by his four children, six grandchildren, and brother.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in celebrating the life of, and bidding farewell to, Pat Mullins. May he rest in peace, and his family be comforted.

ELIJAH RAMOS

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Elijah Ramos for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Elijah Ramos is a student at Moore Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Elijah Ramos is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Elijah Ramos for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

SGT DON VOSS RETIREMENT

HON. DON BACON

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a lifelong servant from Sarpy County, Nebraska, Sergeant Don Voss. As we see the end of one officer's historic career, we are reminded of the need for brave police officers from around our great nation to pick up this calling of service.

Sergeant Don Voss joined the police force in 1978 while still serving as a member of the United States Marine Corps Reserve. He received awards such as the Bellevue Jaycees Officer of the Year, the Knights of Aksarben Citizen Soldier Award, and the Michael J. Elman Officer of the Year Award. He received the Department Life Saving Award for quickly administering CPR to an infant, ultimately saving their life. He was a pioneer in community policing as a narcotics officer responsible for combating the growing opiate problem and providing care to Sarpy families whose children and loved ones were battling opiate addiction.

Don is a sterling example of someone who has put their life on the line, day in and day out, for nearly 40 years protecting the citizens of Nebraska. Sgt Don Voss, I wish you and your family the best in this next phase in your life. You and the entire police family will always have a friend in Washington, DC.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NORTHWEST ALABAMA COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (NACOLG)

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG) which was created in 1967.

Then Alabama Governor Lurleen Wallace signed legislation in June of 1967 to establish NACOLG. Over the past five decades the organization has played a pivotal role in the economic opportunities of Northwest Alabama and has improved the daily lives of its citizens.

NACOLG is an association of 37 governmental units in the five county region of Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion, and Winston Counties, along with the municipalities inside those counties. It is an association

where local leaders can address issues of region-wide importance.

50 years after its creation, NACOLG continues to fulfill its original mission, which was to serve senior citizens in its five county region. NACOLG helps seniors in numerous ways, from getting medical care, to ensuring fair treatment, to finding jobs for area seniors.

In addition to serving senior citizens, NACOLG's role has expanded into economic and community development. NACOLG serves as a conduit for federal dollars to projects as diverse as water and sewer infrastructure to community tornado shelters.

Growing up in this area, I appreciate the significant role that NACOLG has also played in providing economic opportunities to people of Northwest Alabama. The Council's revolving loan program gives smaller municipalities access to capital to purchase land, and construct or renovate buildings to lure new business and jobs to the area.

Currently, NACOLG is led by Keith Jones, and has an excellent staff that makes sure the five county region is well served. On this 50th anniversary of NACOLG, I send my best wishes to all those who work directly and indirectly with NACOLG. I know NACOLG and its member partners will continue to use its strength to work for the people of Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion, and Winston Counties.

EZEKIEL REYNA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Ezekiel Reyna for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Ezekiel Reyna is a student at Standley Lake High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Ezekiel Reyna is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Ezekiel Reyna for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING CHIEF WARRANT
OFFICER THREE TYRONE PINKINS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Warrant Officer Three Tyrone Pinkins.

Chief Warrant Officer Three Tyrone Pinkins was born and raised in Rolling Fork, Mississippi. After graduating high school he attended Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mis-

issippi before joining the Army in June 1996. He went on to earn his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science at the University of Maryland University College while serving on active duty.

Upon enlisting in the Army on June 24, 1996, Chief Warrant Officer Three Pinkins attended Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina followed by Advanced Individual Training at Fort Gordon, Georgia as a Signal Systems Support Specialist (31U). Prior to his appointment as a Warrant Officer, he completed the Primary Leadership Development Course, 7th Army Noncommissioned Officers Academy, Grafenwoehr, Germany; the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Fort Gordon, Georgia; and the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course, Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Fort Gordon, Georgia. He received his appointment as a Warrant Officer in 2007 and has completed the Warrant Officer Basic Course, Warrant Officer Advanced Course and the Electronic Warfare Officer Course.

Throughout 21 years of service Chief Warrant Officer Three Pinkins has served in a variety of assignments to include major combat operations. His previous assignments include Signal Support Systems Specialist, 4th Battalion 1st Field Artillery Regiment, Fort Riley, Kansas; Squad Leader, 2nd Battalion 37th Armor, Friedberg, Germany; Section Chief, 2nd Battalion 69th Armor, Fort Benning, Georgia; Platoon Sergeant, 2nd Battalion 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, Giessen, Germany, and Battalion Communications Chief, 1st Battalion 214th Aviation Regiment, Mannheim, Germany. His assignments as a Warrant Officer include Network Security Technician, HQ 1st Armored Division, Wiesbaden, Germany; Brigade S-6 OIC, 10th Regional Support Group, Okinawa, Japan.

Chief Warrant Officer Three Pinkins' deployments include three tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom where he served in Baghdad, Tikrit and Najaf, Iraq respectively, as well as Operation New Dawn in Baghdad, Iraq.

Chief Warrant Officer Three Pinkins is a recipient of the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Army Meritorious Service Medal with One Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal with 4 Oak Leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Presidential Unit Citation Award, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, the Meritorious Unit Citation, Army Good Conduct Medal third award, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal with service star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon with numeral three, the Army Achievement Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, and the Drivers/Mechanic Badge.

Chief Warrant Officer Three Pinkins is currently assigned as a Presidential Communications Aide at the White House directly responsible for communications and technical support to the President of the United States.

In addition to his role at the White House as Communications Aide and U.S. Army Chief, Warrant Officer Three, Tyrone Pinkins is also the founder of The Pyramid Project, an organization aimed at addressing the lack of business, government and public-sector exposure and development programs for youth at the base of the economic pyramid in the Mississippi Delta.

In an effort to combat these deficits, Warrant Officer Pinkins launched the youth devel-

opment, mentorship and leadership programs: Cultural Exchange & Interaction Initiative (C.E.I.I), Youth Exposure Tour (Y.E.T), Ellevote Girl Initiative (E.G.I), E.G.I Forum, Ascend Forum and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Tour.

With only a shoestring organizational budget and invaluable volunteers, Pinkins simultaneously created unprecedented partnerships with government agencies, corporations, universities, museums and nonprofit networks and collaborated with middle and high school officials to encourage youth to enter into grade and writing contests as a way of earning opportunities to participate in his programs.

These efforts paved the way for The Pyramid Project to afford the selected students, grades 6-12, to learn firsthand about the government, corporate and community dynamics, history, historical sites and broaden their horizon during once-in-a-lifetime, weeklong tours of metropolitan cities like Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Chief Warrant Officer Three Tyrone Pinkins for his dedication to serving our great country and the growth and development of the youth in the Mississippi Delta.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a bill, along with Representative ANDY HARRIS of Maryland, that would establish a bicentennial commission to study ways that the federal government might honor and celebrate the life of Frederick Douglass during the bicentennial anniversary of his birth, in 2018.

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in 1818 on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He learned basic reading skills from his mistress and continued to teach himself and other slaves to read and write despite the risks he faced, including death. After two attempts, Douglass successfully escaped to New York and became an abolitionist and anti-slavery lecturer. He went on to serve in several administrations, including as a close advisor to President Abraham Lincoln, U.S. Marshal of the District of Columbia under President Rutherford B. Hayes, and District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds under President James Garfield. In 1889, President Benjamin Harrison appointed Frederick Douglass to be the U.S. minister to Haiti. He was later appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant to serve as secretary of the commission of Santo Domingo.

Douglass dedicated his life to achieving justice for all Americans. He lived in the District of Columbia for 23 of his 57 years as a free man and his home at Cedar Hill was established as a National Historic Site in Southeast Washington, D.C. The Frederick Douglass statue that stands in his honor in the United States Capitol is a gift from the nearly 700,000 residents of the District of Columbia.

My bill would establish a commission to examine ways the federal government can honor Douglass during the bicentennial anniversary of his birth, including the issuance of a Frederick Douglass bicentennial postage stamp,

the convening of a joint meeting or joint session of Congress for ceremonies and activities relating to Frederick Douglass, a rededication of the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, and the acquisition and preservation of artifacts associated with Frederick Douglass. The commission would report its findings and recommendations to Congress.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

ESTRELLA ROBLES

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Estrella Robles for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Estrella Robles is a student at Arvada K–8 School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Estrella Robles is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Estrella Robles for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING THE WHITLAND AVENUE NEIGHBORS IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

HON. JIM COOPER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Whitland Avenue neighbors. The Whitland area is one of the most historic—and beautiful—neighborhoods in Middle Tennessee.

Built in the earliest days of the 20th century, this relatively small neighborhood has more historical markers than any other in Davidson County.

In 1976, residents vowed to hold an annual party on the Fourth of July to celebrate our nation's birthday and keep our patriotic spirit alive. The celebration was conceived to include a number of timeless activities such as a bicycle parade for neighbors of all ages; performances of patriotic tunes by a band of local musicians; enthusiastic singing by all in attendance; a dramatic reading of the Declaration of Independence; recognition of veterans for their service; speeches by elected officials and other local dignitaries; and a covered dish picnic lunch.

The Whitland Avenue Fourth of July Celebration has become one of Nashville's most festive events. The neighborhood invites the entire city to join in a family-friendly parade and gathering to celebrate our great nation.

The neighbors start planning months in advance, and each year's event is bigger and better than the last.

On July 4, 2017, the neighbors at Whitland Avenue will celebrate the 40th Anniversary of this beloved event. It is an honor to recognize the community, their spirit, and their patriotism. Whitland Avenue is the heart of Nashville, and I hope the community spirit lives on for generations to come.

NATIONAL SCLERODERMA AWARENESS MONTH

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Scleroderma Awareness Month.

Scleroderma is an autoimmune disease that not only affects thousands of individuals within my own constituency and the state of New York, but also thousands of individuals living in the United States.

Due to the lack of research on the unpredictable progression of Scleroderma, many physicians find it difficult to diagnose their patients and find it even more difficult to provide adequate treatment since a cure has not been discovered. As we recognize the need for awareness of this troublesome disease, we must do more for the thousands of Americans who are diagnosed with this condition each year.

In the past, I have championed legislation aimed toward galvanizing many federal agencies to fund research for Scleroderma with former Congresswoman Lois Capps of California. As a representative, I consider myself responsible for the health and safety of my constituents. This is why I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting federal investment for research as well as recognizing June as Scleroderma Awareness Month.

ETHAN STRAUCH

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Ethan Strauch for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Ethan Strauch is a student at Drake Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Ethan Strauch is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Ethan Strauch for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING ELEANORE DEVADETZSKY

HON. DWIGHT EVANS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a noted centenarian of Philadelphia, Ms. Eleanore deVadetzky.

Eleanore deVadetzky was born in Pennsylvania Hospital on June 11, 1917, to Minna (nee Wolfsohn) and Teyve Rosenstein of Olney and Wynnefield. It was just months after the entry of the U.S. into WW I. Teyve had a trained voice, a choir leader, opera enthusiast, taught music and song and was a strong supporter of the founding of Israel.

Minna fled an unhappy family situation in Latvia, when a very young woman, making her way alone to the New World, with little more than a suitcase crammed with philosophy books, Spinoza and Maimonides. She was a homemaker, suffragette, and struggling businesswoman, who prized education and always had a book in her hands. She studied science, and upon graduating, became a chemist, first at Tastycake Bakery and later, at Whitman's Chocolates.

Along the way, Eleanore Rosenstein met the dashing Vladimir, aka Walter, deVadetzky, who bore a striking resemblance to actor Richard Ney, and was on his way to the South Pacific to fight in World War II. They wrote letters during his absence, and they were married on his return.

They managed to travel to far-flung places around the globe such as China, Japan, Australia for the '56 Olympics, pre-Castro Cuba, Central and South America, and almost every European country, making friends wherever they were. Both here and abroad, Eleanore & Walter enjoyed theater, ballet, music and art.

For many years, they both volunteered at Pennsylvania and Graduate hospitals. When Walter passed away in 2005, Eleanore continued volunteering at Pennsylvania Hospital and CHOP, until 2010, when she was sidelined with a broken ankle. She never touched alcohol, but always had a cocktail waiting for Walter at the end of the day, and was a connoisseur and devotee of dark chocolate, to which she attributed her longevity. Eleanore frequently visited with family and friends around the globe by telephone.

Sadly, Eleanore passed away on Tuesday, June 13, 2017 from complications of dementia. Her family and friends celebrated her 100th birthday and said goodbye on Sunday, June 11. She is survived by her cousins Rosenstein, Winitz, Wagner, Dichter, Kaplan & Vaughan.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during Roll Call vote No. 309 and No. 310 due to my spouse's health situation in California. Had I been present, I would have voted yea on H.R. 2847—Improving Services for Older Youth in Foster Care Act, and yea

on H.R. 2866—Reducing Barriers for Relative Foster Parents Act.

EVAN VIGIL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Evan Vigil for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Evan Vigil is a student at Arvada West High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Evan Vigil is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Evan Vigil for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ENSURING SUCCESSFUL REENTRY ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Ensuring Successful Reentry Act, a bill to eliminate so-called “subsistence fees.” Federal law currently requires the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to impose a subsistence fee on the income of returning citizens living in residential reentry centers (RRCs), supposedly to promote financial responsibility by requiring RRC residents to pay a portion of their housing costs. The fee is currently 25 percent. However, many returning citizens living in these centers often work minimum wage jobs, so the loss of 25 percent of their paychecks is a significant hurdle to successful reentry, and it makes it extremely difficult for them to save money for rent, pay child support, or fines and fees associated with their conviction (such as restitution). Only last year, BOP eliminated the subsistence fee for returning citizens on home confinement, who cost BOP nothing for maintenance. Far from promoting financial responsibility, subsistence fees actually prevent returning citizens from meeting their financial obligations.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has already recognized how “counterproductive” subsistence fees are, both for returning citizens and BOP. In a November 2016 memo, then-Deputy Attorney General Sally Q. Yates noted that BOP’s “process for collecting these subsistence fees is costly and administratively burdensome for both RRC’s and [BOP],” and called for DOJ to “develop a plan to limit the

use of counterproductive ‘subsistence’ fees imposed on indigent residents.” BOP can already waive subsistence fees in certain situations for residents of RRCs, but only a change in federal law can remove this unnecessary barrier to reentry.

We should not be imposing additional burdens on returning citizens, setting them up to fail, especially those who are employed and working toward independence from the criminal justice system. Jobs and affordable housing are crucial components in ensuring successful reentry—charging subsistence fees is antithetical to this goal. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

MODIFICATIONS OF CREDIT FOR PRODUCTION FROM ADVANCED NUCLEAR POWER FACILITIES

SPEECH OF

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor of H.R. 1551, I would like to thank Mr. RICE and Mr. BLUMENAUER for authoring this bill that modifies the credit for energy production from advanced nuclear facilities. I would also like to thank Chairman KEVIN BRADY for guiding this legislation favorably through the Committee on Ways and Means, and House leadership for helping to bring it to the floor today.

My congressional district in North Texas is home to many people that are currently employed and actively engaged in the planning, approval, and construction of advanced nuclear facilities. One such constituent company, Fluor Corporation, is headquartered in Irving, Texas. This US-based engineering and construction company employs 15,000 employees working on energy and power, infrastructure, mining, and industrial projects in Texas alone. Currently, Fluor supervises the construction of the four reactors at two sites employing almost 6,000 people.

Employees at this and other companies nationwide work to advance the construction of these nuclear facilities. Finishing these projects is crucial for the employees, engineers, and the industrial base that we need to retain in the United States.

I believe, and I am sure my colleagues agree, that the impacts of these projects are important for both our civilian and military markets. In addition, the changes presented in H.R. 1551 will potentially benefit many companies involved in design, fabrication, and construction of additional nuclear units.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation and urge my colleagues to do so as well.

EZRA WRIGHT

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Ezra Wright

for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Ezra Wright is a student at Mandalay Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Ezra Wright is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Ezra Wright for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING THE WAUKEGAN TO COLLEGE (W2C) PROGRAM

HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rafael Aguilera, Guadalupe Bueno, Ezau Calderon, Elisa Flores, Juan Carlos Flores, Elijah Glaze, Jared Herrera-Sanchez, Estrella Limon, Anjelica Linares, Ivan Martinez, Veronica Martinez, Sebastian Salgado-Gonzalez, Tamara Sanchez, and Emily Sostre for their admittance into the Waukegan to College (W2C) program.

A year-round college readiness service, W2C launched in 2009 and seeks to advance local students’ intellectual and emotional development, cultivating a strong commitment to community and a profound belief that they can build a brighter future for themselves, their families and their communities. By establishing high academic expectations and counseling students and their families on the college application process, W2C helps students realize their full potential by making the dream of college a reality.

All of these students will be the first in their families to attend college, and were selected for the W2C program due to both their impressive academic achievements as well as their contributions to their communities. As leaders inside and outside the classroom, these students show tremendous dedication and potential.

Strengthening our communities requires rebuilding the ladders of opportunity so that all Americans have the opportunity to succeed and thrive. This begins with providing each and every child, regardless of zip code, access to a high quality, affordable education, continues by ensuring all families can afford to send their sons and daughters to college.

When our nation’s talented young people pursue their passions and follow their dreams, they accomplish far more than personal growth. They serve as role models in their communities and their achievements inspire and motivate other young people to equally strive and achieve.

These students truly are Champions of Change. I wish them the very best of luck in their higher education and in all their future endeavors.

CELEBRATING THE 90TH BIRTHDAY OF MATTHEW 'MATTY' FERRENTINO

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the active and impressive life of my friend Matthew 'Matty' Ferrentino as he celebrates his 90th birthday on June 21, 2017.

Matty Ferrentino is the son of Italian immigrants and was born and raised in Buffalo, NY. He and his wife Joan now live in West Seneca, NY.

Matty graduated from University at Buffalo in 1951 with a bachelor's degree in physical education. During his time at the University at Buffalo, Matty played football for the UB Bulls, starting all four years as offensive guard and defensive linebacker. In 1950, Matty earned Little All-American status and led the UB Bulls as co-captain in their fifth straight winning season.

After his time at UB, Matty began working at the Ford Stamping Plant as a guard and retired in 1994 as a Production Manager. Matty and his wife Joan raised three children: Dan, Judy, and Rob and now have five grandchildren: Dani, Baylea, Conner, Drew and Gracie. In September, Matty will become a great-grandfather for the first time.

Physical activity has long been a part of Matty's life. In addition to leading the UB Bulls during his time at school, Matty boxed in the U.S. Army and as an amateur outside of the army. Even today, Matty remains active working out at LA Fitness. I am honored to be among the many friendships that Matty has developed through the years at the gym. His discipline and perseverance is an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the accomplishments of my friend, Matty Ferrentino. I look forward to celebrating his 90 years of life with family and friends who have traveled from near and far on June 23, 2017. I wish Matty and his family health and happiness in all the days to come.

CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL SCARLET DRAGON BASEBALL TEAM OF MARTINSBURG, PA

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the achievements of the Central High School Varsity Baseball team of Martinsburg, Pennsylvania. The countless hours of commitment required by the players and coaches was rewarded by their PIAA, 3A State Championship win on Thursday, June 15th. The Scarlet Dragons defeated Holy Redeemer High School with a final score of 8-3 in the team's first-ever state championship. The Dragons finished the season with a record of 24-3.

The team represented Pennsylvania's Blair County at Penn State's Medlar Field at

Lubrano Park. The town of Martinsburg, PA is small but mighty, much like that of the 40 player team led by their head coach AJ Hoenstine. Coach Hoenstine has led the Dragons as a head coach for 10 years, and is a Central High School Baseball alum himself.

The 2017 varsity team was home to 11 seniors with a solidly backed line up of underclassmen. The game's star pitcher was a junior named Preston Karstetter. Karstetter took over for the team's ace Jarret Imler after the Dragons made it to the final game of the playoffs. The rest of the starting line-up from the Championship Game included Alex Hoenstine, Chase Smith, Josh McKnight, Michael Speck, Noah Muthler, Hunter Liebal, Larry Corle, Jacob Muthler, Brady Nicewonger, and Brice Brumbaugh.

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to congratulate the players and coaches of the Central High School's Varsity Baseball team on their championship win. The type of dedication and hard work required to achieve this level of victory will surely follow these young men throughout the rest of their lives.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF WORLD WAR II VETERAN ALBERT CUMMINGS

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor World War II Veteran Albert Cummings who served our great nation from 1944 until 1946. Mr. Cummings answered the call to defend America and distinguished himself during some of the fiercest campaigns in Europe, including the D-Day Invasion of Normandy on the northern coast of France.

Mr. Cummings was raised on a farm in Carrolton, Alabama. He was one of 13 children. Mr. Cummings left the family farm to fight in World War II. He was 18 years old when he trained for the U.S. Army Infantry. Mr. Cummings excelled during his military service as a Squad Leader. He achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant (SSG).

Mr. Cummings was wounded as he made his way to Utah Beach during the invasion of Normandy. He was shot by a German soldier. Mr. Cummings was picked up by a MASH unit and strapped to the top of a field ambulance. He spent 17 days in a hospital in France. He was transferred to a hospital in England for five months. In January 1945, Mr. Cummings came back to the United States on a Liberty ship. Liberty ship was the name given to the EC2, the ship designed for emergency construction by the U.S. Maritime Commission. While sailing across the Atlantic Ocean, the ship split in half. These ships traveled in convoys, so he was able to be picked up. Mr. Cummings continued his recovery at the Augusta Army Hospital in Georgia. He spent a total of nine months in hospitals in Europe and the U.S. After his recovery, Mr. Cummings continued to serve our nation guarding Prisoner of War (POW) camps from Mississippi to California. He was honorably discharged in January 1946.

When Mr. Cummings completed his military service, he took a job as a Trailways bus driv-

er. In 1949, he met his future wife, Helen, who worked at a Columbus restaurant. They were married in 1950. They had two children, Cheryl and Tim. Mr. Cummings was later employed as a truck driver for Campbell 66 and worked there until he retired. Mr. Cummings enjoys spending the majority of his time with his five grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

In July, Mr. Cummings will be honored for his military service by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4272. He will be honored for serving in WWII and for his service as a past Post 4272 Commander, VFW District Commander, and VFW State Commander.

Mr. Cummings has demonstrated what it is to be a patriotic American who is willing to fight for the freedoms we all enjoy. He has led a life of honor and honesty which is why we call Mr. Cummings and others like him "The Greatest Generation."

EXPO 2017

HON. DANA ROHRABACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, over the 25 years of Kazakhstan's independence, that country has become a valued member of the international community. Its commitment to building a relationship with the United States has resulted in stronger ties and a strategic partnership rooted in shared interests.

After the Soviet Union dissolved, Kazakhstan inherited the fourth largest nuclear stockpile in the world. Through President Nursultan Nazarbayev's leadership, this nuclear arsenal was decommissioned and the steadfastness of their government in this matter has become a key part of our bilateral relations.

Today, I would like to call my colleagues' attention to the international Expo 2017 which recently opened in the capital city of Astana. This unique event is focused on addressing the challenging issues of our time, especially the need for improved energy solutions. Expo 2017 is expected to draw nearly five million visitors over just a few months.

I congratulate the leaders and the people of Kazakhstan on the opening of Expo 2017 and wish them success as public audiences visit the exposition and the nation of Kazakhstan.

RECOGNIZING PRISCILLA KIRKPATRICK

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, it is truly remarkable and moving to witness a student chosen among their generation to bring strong direction to their community. As a leader of leaders, this extraordinary individual contributes their time, energy, and wisdom to create opportunities for many to succeed. Priscilla Kirkpatrick, from Franklin, Tennessee, is one of these distinguished leaders. She was elected as governor of the American Legion Auxiliary's Volunteer Girls State and was chosen to be one of the 2017 Girls Nation Nominees.

For Priscilla, there is no limit nor bound of what could be attained. Her mindful service and vision for community has inspired many to go above and beyond themselves. Priscilla's success in the classroom, and involvement in several extracurricular activities has set her apart from the rest of her peers. These experiences have prepared her to perform the responsibilities that come along with this role. Franklin High School has been marked by her caring and serving nature. Leadership is not as it appears, but as it performs. I congratulate Priscilla for her new role as governor of the American Legion Auxiliary's Volunteer Girls State.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF WALKER ALEXANDER WIL-
LIAMS, JR.

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring the life and legacy of District of Columbia resident and my friend Walker Alexander Williams, Jr. Walker, who is 76, was honored this week at the Lincoln Theatre.

Born on November 7, 1940, Walker Alexander Williams, Jr. took on a selfless life of service to others. After attending Boston University and earning a degree in communications, he went on to attend Seton Hall and Rutgers University's Graduate Schools of Business Administration. From there, he built an impressive career working with an array of non-governmental organizations on issues ranging from education to economic development. During this time, he developed an expertise in the area of African and Caribbean development. He had a remarkable understanding of the African and Caribbean diaspora and politics, and realized the importance of elevating their voices in Washington, advocating for them and advising international and U.S. government agencies. He went on to found Leadership Africa USA in 2006 and served as President and Founder of Education Africa USA, focusing on educational challenges in South Africa.

Walker leaves behind his partner, Janice M. Smith; his brother, Kenneth Williams; his sisters Diane Harris and Elaine Bloom; children, Bryn Williams Meyer and Walker Williams III; and his grandchildren Max Meyer, Lashonna and Yahshua Williams.

I ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring the life and legacy of Walker Alexander Williams, Jr., and remembering his selfless dedication to others.

IN RECOGNITION OF PATRICIA
RICHARDS FOR HER CAREER AS
A PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCATE
WITH MARATHON PETROLEUM

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Patricia Richards upon the oc-

casional of her retirement from Marathon Petroleum Corporation. Ms. Richards has been a strong advocate for energy policies that benefit working Americans throughout her career.

Ms. Richards began her career with Marathon as a state government affairs representative, serving in the states of Florida, Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio. In these roles, Ms. Richards distinguished herself as a knowledgeable representative with deep knowledge of the industry as well as the regulatory environment of the states in which she worked. As a result of her success in these roles, Ms. Richards was named director of Marathon Oil Corporation's Federal Government Affairs. In this position, Ms. Richards was responsible for helping formulate the company's policies addressing safety and environmental standards at the federal level. She was then promoted to head of office for Marathon Petroleum Corporation's Federal Government Affairs Office in Washington, D.C., where she utilized her public policy expertise to advocate for policies that help MPC serve its customers and the communities in which it operates.

Ms. Richards' work with Marathon has been critical to the growth and success of the organization. As a result of Ms. Richards' efforts, MPC has achieved distinction as a leading company that has created good-paying jobs throughout the Midwest while maintaining a focus on customer service and satisfaction. Additionally, Ms. Richards has been active in the Washington, D.C. community, working with various nonprofits and charitable organizations and remaining engaged with the community at large. Her advocacy, efforts, and deep knowledge of the industry have made her an effective public policy professional for over 30 years, and her expertise will be missed as she retires after a distinguished career.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Patricia Richards for her career with MPC. Ms. Richards has effectively served the company and the community through her leadership and hard work.

TRIBUTE TO MR. RICHARD S.
MATLOCK

HON. MO BROOKS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2017

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement from the Department of Defense, I raise tribute to Mr. Richard S. Matlock for a 40-year career as a civil servant and distinguished member of the Senior Executive Service of the United States. Mr. Matlock was one of the Department of Defense's top Science and Technology Executives. In his most recent position, Mr. Matlock served as the Program Executive for Advanced Technology for the Missile Defense Agency. In this position, he led the development of the next generation cutting-edge missile defense technology and proved the benefit to the warfighter through realistic experiments in relevant environments. Mr. Matlock developed new missile defense capabilities that outpaced threats from potential adversaries and enabled the Ballistic Missile Defense System to defend the Nation, its deployed forces, and its friends and allies against ballistic missile attack. Mr. Matlock's portfolio included high en-

ergy lasers, advanced sensors, and future anti-ballistic missile interceptors. Mr. Matlock simultaneously directed a Department-wide missile defeat special program for the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Mr. Matlock's previous Senior Executive assignments included the Program Director for Ballistic Missile Defense System Kill Vehicles, Program Director for Modeling and Simulation, and Technical Director for Kinetic Energy Interceptors.

Mr. Matlock's broad based career in government service included major acquisition and scientific positions with the Office of the Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, the Missile Defense Agency, the United States Navy, the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, and the United States Air Force.

While serving at the Missile Defense Agency, Mr. Matlock led the world's first destruction of a ballistic missile during boost using an airborne high energy laser. His expert management skills enabled the program to overcome numerous technical hurdles to accomplish a feat many leading scientists declared outside the laws of physics. Mr. Matlock also initiated a joint experimental plan with the United States Air Force to prove the utility of unmanned aerial vehicle systems in a missile defense role. As the Senior Executive responsible for developing, integrating, testing, and procuring advanced kill vehicles for all exo-atmospheric interceptors, Mr. Matlock defined a modular kill vehicle concept that decreased the number of system developments which reduced cost and risk. Mr. Matlock also redirected the agency's modeling and simulation approach by using state of the art open architecture frameworks that allowed plug and play capability of a disparate set of models from a diverse contractor base thus eliminating intellectual property loss and reducing the time required for model code rewrite.

During his tenure with the Naval Sea Systems Command, Mr. Matlock led the development and implementation of a joint missile defense research program with the Japan Defense Agency which set in motion the joint deployment of the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System. Prior to employment with the Navy, Mr. Matlock was the Program Manager for Interceptor Technology Integration in the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (formerly the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization). Mr. Matlock developed the Lightweight Exo-Atmospheric Projectile, a primary building block for the Nation's missile defense programs. As Program Manager for this technology demonstration program, he established the experimental pathfinder for the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense Program. Mr. Matlock also built, launched, and operated several earth observing satellites, proving the value of low cost rapidly fieldable microsattellites for complex missile defense and space control missions.

Prior to joining the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, Mr. Matlock held several positions in the Department of the Air Force, both as an officer and civil servant including Chief of Integration and Analysis at the Air Force Rocket Propulsion Laboratory and Technology Director, Space Based Interceptor System Program Office at Air Force Systems Command's Space Division.

Mr. Matlock's major awards include the Air Force Aerospace Primus Award, the Outstanding Technical Achievement Award for Missile Defense, the Navy Superior Civilian

Service Award, the Missile Defense Agency's Star for Program Management, the inaugural Missile Defense Technology Pioneer Award, the Meritorious Presidential Rank Award, and the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Civilian Service.

Mr. Matlock consistently exemplified a true dedication to our Nation and its ideals. His vision and drive enabled fielding of a truly worldwide ballistic missile defense capability that will be part of this Nation's defense for decades to come. The Ballistic Missile Defense System is one of mankind's greatest technical achievements. Mr. Matlock created programs that matured technology, strengthened the Nation's industrial base, leveraged the capabilities of laboratories and universities, and grew a science and technology workforce that will meet the needs of the next generation of missile defense systems. Our Nation owes Mr. Matlock and his family a debt of gratitude for his outstanding leadership and service.

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, June 22, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JUNE 26

4 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Airland
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018.
SR-232A

JUNE 27

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Environmental Protection Agency.
SD-124

Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the sub-

committee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018.
SR-232A

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard
To hold hearings to examine marine sanctuaries, focusing on fisheries, access, the environment, and maritime heritage.
SR-253

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Amendments Act, focusing on reauthorizing America's vital national security authority and protecting privacy and civil liberties.
SD-226

10 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Security Exchange Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.
SD-138

10:30 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Labor.
SD-192

11 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018.
SR-232A

2 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Personnel
Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018.
SD-G50

2:45 p.m.
Committee on Environment and Public Works
Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety
To hold hearings to examine developing and deploying advanced clean energy technologies.
SD-406

3:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018.
SR-232A

4:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities
Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed Na-

tional Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018.
SD-G50

5:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018.
SR-232A

JUNE 28

9 a.m.
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
SD-106

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Closed business meeting to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018.
SR-222

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Timothy J. Kelly, and Trevor N. McFadden, of Virginia, both to be a United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, and Jeffrey Bossert Clark, of Virginia, and Beth Ann Williams, of New Jersey, both to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice.
SD-226

10 a.m.
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Claire M. Grady, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary for Management, Department of Homeland Security, and Henry Kerner, of California, to be Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel.
SD-342

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation.
SD-138

JUNE 29

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
To hold hearings to examine conservation and forestry, focusing on perspectives on the past and future direction for the 2018 Farm Bill.
SH-216

Committee on Armed Services
Closed business meeting to continue to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018.
SR-222

JUNE 30

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Closed business meeting to continue to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018.
SR-222

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3657–S3695

Measures Introduced: Eighteen bills and three resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1387–1404, and S. Res. 196–198. **Page S3686**

Measures Reported:

S. 97, to enable civilian research and development of advanced nuclear energy technologies by private and public institutions, to expand theoretical and practical knowledge of nuclear physics, chemistry, and materials science. (S. Rept. No. 115–115) **Page S3685**

Messages from the President: Senate received the following messages from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008, with respect to North Korea; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. (PM–10) **Page S3682**

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001, with respect to the Western Balkans; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. (PM–11) **Page S3683**

Billingslea Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Marshall Billingslea, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorist Financing. **Pages S3677–78**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 65 yeas to 34 nays (Vote No. 151), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S3678**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 11 a.m., on Thursday, June 22, 2017; and that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment and Leader remarks count post-cloture on the nomination. **Page S3690**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 96 yeas to 4 nays (Vote No. EX. 150), Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes. **Pages S3660–78, S3695**

Messages from the House: **Page S3683**

Measures Referred: **Page S3683**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Page S3683**

Executive Communications: **Pages S3683–85**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S3685–86**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S3686–88**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S3688–90**

Additional Statements: **Pages S3681–82**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S3668–69**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—151) **Page S3678**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 12 p.m. and adjourned at 6:49 p.m., until 11 a.m. on Thursday, June 22, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3690.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Interior, after receiving testimony from Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of the Air Force, after receiving testimony from Heather Wilson, Secretary of the Air Force, and General David L. Goldfein, USAF, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, both of the Department of Defense.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Energy, after receiving testimony from Rick Perry, Secretary of Energy.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 and 2019 for the Department of Veterans Affairs, after receiving testimony from David J. Shulkin, Secretary, Poonam L. Alaigh, Acting Under Secretary for Health, and Mark W. Yow, Chief Financial Officer, both of the Veterans Health Administration, Thomas J. Murphy, Acting Under Secretary for Benefits, Veterans Benefits Administration, and Ronald E. Walters, Interim Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, all of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

APPROPRIATIONS: GAO AND CBO

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Budget Office, after receiving testimony from Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General of the United States, Government Accountability Office; and Keith Hall, Director, Congressional Budget Office.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on SeaPower concluded a hearing to examine Navy shipbuilding programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2018 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from Allison F. Stiller, performing the duties of Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, De-

velopment, and Acquisition, Vice Admiral William K. Lescher, USN, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Integration of Capabilities and Resources (N8), and Lieutenant General Robert S. Walsh, USMC, Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Commander, United States Marine Forces Strategic Command, all of the Department of Defense.

NOMINATION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of David P. Pekoske, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, after the nominee testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining concluded a hearing to examine collaborative initiatives, focusing on restoring watersheds and large landscapes across boundaries through state and Federal partnerships, after receiving testimony from Kristin Bail, Assistant Director for Resources and Planning, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior; Leslie Weldon, Deputy Chief, National Forest System, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Virgil Moore, Idaho Department of Fish and Game Director, Boise, on behalf of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; and Tyler Thompson, Utah Department of Natural Resources Watershed Restoration Initiative Director, Salt Lake City.

TRADE POLICY AGENDA BUDGET

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018 and the trade policy agenda, after receiving testimony from Robert E. Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President.

2017 TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee received a closed briefing on preparing for the 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report from Susan Coppedge, Ambassador-at-Large, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Department of State.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director, and Neomi Rao, of the District of

Columbia, to be Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, both of the Office of Management and Budget.

CYBERSECURITY REGULATION HARMONIZATION

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine cybersecurity regulation harmonization, after receiving testimony from James Reese, Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services Information Services Chief Information Officer, Oklahoma City, on behalf of the National Association of State Chief Information Officers; Christopher F. Feeney, The Financial Services Roundtable—BITS, and Dean C. Garfield, Information Technology Industry Council, both of Washington, D.C.; and Daniel Nutkis, HITRUST Alliance, Frisco, Texas.

MS-13 AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the MS-13 problem, focusing on investigating gang membership, its nexus to illegal immigration, and Federal efforts to end the threat, after receiving testimony from Carla Provost, Acting Chief, Border Patrol, Customs and Border Protection, Matthew Albence, Executive Associate Director, Enforcement and Removal Operations, and Derek N. Benner, Acting Executive Associate Direc-

tor, Homeland Security Investigations, both of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, all of the Department of Homeland Security; Scott Lloyd, Director, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services; and Kenneth A. Blanco, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Justice.

RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN THE 2016 U.S. ELECTIONS

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Russian interference in the 2016 United States elections, after receiving testimony from Jeanette Manfra, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Cybersecurity and Communications, National Protection and Programs Directorate, and Samuel Liles, Acting Director, Cyber Division, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, both of the Department of Homeland Security; Bill Priestap, Assistant Director, Counterintelligence Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice; Michael Haas, Wisconsin Elections Commission Administrator; Connie Lawson, Indiana Secretary of State, on behalf of the National Association of Secretaries of State; Steve Sandvoss, Illinois State Board of Elections Executive Director; and J. Alex Halderman, University of Michigan.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 23 public bills, H.R. 2972–2994; and 3 resolutions, H. Res. 397–399 were introduced. **Pages H5047–48**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H5049–50**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:
H. Res. 396, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2842) to provide for the conduct of demonstration projects to test the effectiveness of subsidized employment for TANF recipients, and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules (H. Rept. 115–187). **Pages H5046–47**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Duncan (TN) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H4997**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:41 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H5001**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rabbi Hershel Lutch, MEOR Foundation, Baltimore, MD. **Pages H5001–02**

Question of Privilege: Pursuant to the foregoing notification and the previous order of the House of June 15, 2017, Representative Doggett rose to a question of the privileges of the House and submitted a resolution. The Chair ruled that the resolution did not present a question of the privileges of the House. Subsequently, Representative Doggett appealed the ruling of the chair and Representative Newhouse moved to table the appeal. Agreed to the motion to table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair by a yea-and-nay vote of 227 yeas to 188 nays with 1 answering “present”, Roll No. 311. **Pages H5013–16**

Oath of Office—At Large Congressional District of Montana: Representative-elect Greg Gianforte presented himself in the well of the House and was administered the Oath of Office by the Speaker. Earlier, the Clerk of the House transmitted a copy of

a letter received from the Honorable Corey Stapleton, Montana Secretary of State, indicating that, at the Special Election held May 25, 2017, the Honorable Greg Gianforte was elected Representative to Congress for the At Large Congressional District, State of Montana. **Pages H5016, H5045–46**

Whole Number of the House: The Speaker announced to the House that, in light of the administration of the oath to the gentleman from Montana, the whole number of the House is 432. **Page H5017**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Fixing Internal Response to Misconduct Act: H.R. 2131, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department of Homeland Security to improve consistency regarding discipline and adverse actions in the Department's workforce; and

Pages H5018–20

DHS Acquisition Review Board Act of 2017: H.R. 1282, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish Acquisition Review Boards in the Department of Homeland Security;

Pages H5021–22

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish Acquisition Review Board in the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes."

Page H5022

Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act: The House passed H.R. 1873, to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to enhance the reliability of the electricity grid and reduce the threat of wildfires to and from electric transmission and distribution facilities on Federal lands by facilitating vegetation management on such lands, by a recorded vote of 300 ayes to 118 noes, Roll No. 315. **Pages H5005–13, H5017–18, H5022–32**

Pursuant to the Rule, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources now printed in the bill shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule. **Page H5005**

Agreed to:

Sinema amendment (No. 2 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–186) that ensures personnel of the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service involved in vegetation management decisions on transmission and distribution rights-of-way receive training on how unmanned technologies can be used to identify vegetation management needs, lower energy costs, and reduce the risk of wildfires; and

Pages H5029–30

Beyer amendment (No. 3 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–186) that prohibits any loss of funds for wild-fire suppression. **Pages H5030–31**

Rejected:

Carbajal amendment (No. 1 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–186) that sought to ensure that owners and operators of electric transmission and distribution facilities submit management plans to the Secretary (by a recorded vote of 171 ayes to 243 noes, Roll No. 314). **Pages H5031–32**

H. Res. 392, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 1873) and (H.R. 1654) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 230 ayes to 185 noes, Roll No. 313, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 229 yeas to 186 nays, Roll No. 312. **Pages H5017–18**

Presidential Messages: Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress that the national emergency declared with respect to the Western Balkans is to continue in effect beyond June 26, 2017—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 115–48).

Page H5034

Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress that the national emergency declared with respect to North Korea is to continue in effect beyond June 26, 2017—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 115–49).

Page H5034

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes and three recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H5015–16, H5017, H5017–18, H5031, H5032. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Committee Meetings

APPROPRIATIONS—OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held a budget hearing on the Office of Management and Budget. Testimony was heard from Mick Mulvaney, Director, Office of Management and Budget.

APPROPRIATIONS—FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Testimony was heard from Andrew G. McCabe, Acting Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities held a markup on H.R. 2810, the “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018”. H.R. 2810 was forwarded to the full committee, without amendment.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces held a markup on H.R. 2810, the “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018”. H.R. 2810 was forwarded to the full committee, without amendment.

DEFINING AND MAPPING BROADBAND COVERAGE IN AMERICA

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled “Defining and Mapping Broadband Coverage in America”. Testimony was heard from Robert Wack, President, Westminster City Council, Maryland; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee continued a markup on H.R. 2868, the “National Flood Insurance Program Policyholder Protection Act of 2017”; H.R. 2874, the “21st Century Flood Reform Act of 2017”; H.R. 1422, the “Flood Insurance Market Parity and Modernization Act”; H.R. 1558, the “Repeatedly Flooded Communities Preparation Act”; H.R. 2246, the “Taxpayer Exposure Mitigation Act of 2017”; H.R. 2565, to require the use of replacement cost value in determining the premium rates for flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Act, and for other purposes; and H.R. 2875, the “National Flood Insurance Program Administrative Reform Act of 2017”. H.R. 2874, H.R. 1558, H.R. 1422, H.R. 2565, and H.R. 2246 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 2868 and H.R. 2875 were ordered reported, without amendment.

GRADING THE EGYPTIAN AND TUNISIAN ENTERPRISE FUNDS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa held a hearing entitled “Grading the Egyptian and Tunisian Enterprise Funds”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee began a markup on H.R. 495, the “Protection of Children Act of 2017”; H.R. 2826, the “Refugee Program Integrity Restoration Act of 2017”; and H.R. 1096, the “Judgment Fund Transparency Act of 2017”.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURE

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing on legislation to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to provide that extraction of helium from gas produced under a Federal mineral lease shall maintain the lease as if the helium were oil and gas. Testimony was heard from Tim Spisak, Acting Assistant Director, Energy, Minerals, and Realty Management, Bureau of Land Management, 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. 2662, the “Restoring Accountability in the Indian Health Service Act of 2017”. Testimony was heard from Representative Noem; Rear Admiral Chris Buchanan, Assistant Surgeon General, Public Health Service, and Deputy Director, Indian Health Service; and public witnesses.

ACCELERATING INDIVIDUALS INTO THE WORKFORCE

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 2842, the “Accelerating Individuals into the Workforce Act”. The Committee granted, by voice vote, a structured rule for H.R. 2842. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule makes in order as original text for purpose of amendment an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–22 and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Additionally, section 2 of the rule provides that it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of June 22, 2017, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules relating to the bill H.R. 2353, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for

the 21st Century Act. Testimony was heard from Representatives Neal, Davidson, and Smith of Nebraska.

LEADING THE WAY: EXAMINING ADVANCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Environment held a hearing entitled “Leading the Way: Examining Advances in Environmental Technologies”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PARTNERS IN COMMERCE: THE TRADE PROMOTION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Partners in Commerce: The Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee”. Testimony was heard from Patrick Kirwan, Director, Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce; Peter J. Cazamias, Associate Administrator, Office of International Trade, Small Business Administration; and Ann Pardalos, Manager, International Trade and Investment Office, Missouri Department of Economic Development.

HEARING WITH FORMER SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY JEH JOHNSON

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Russia Investigation Task Force held a hearing entitled “Hearing with Former Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson”. Testimony was heard from a public witness.

ONGOING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES: FY 18 BUDGET REQUEST

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Subcommittee on National Security Agency and Cybersecurity held a hearing entitled “Ongoing Intelligence Activities: FY 18 Budget Request”.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of J. Christopher Giancarlo, of New Jersey, to be Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, 9:30 a.m., SR-328A.

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Edu-

cation, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the National Institutes of Health, 10 a.m., SD-138.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine fostering economic growth, focusing on regulator perspective, 10:15 a.m., SD-538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, to hold hearings to examine efforts on marine debris in the oceans and Great Lakes, 10 a.m., SR-253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine the President’s proposed budget request for fiscal year 2018 for the Department of Energy, 10:30 a.m., SD-366.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 1312, to prioritize the fight against human trafficking in the United States, S. 1311, to provide assistance in abolishing human trafficking in the United States, and the nomination of Stephen Elliott Boyd, of Alabama, to be an Assistant Attorney General, 11 a.m., SD-226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH-219.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Full Committee, hearing entitled “The Next Farm Bill: University Research”, 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Readiness, markup on H.R. 2810, the “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018”, 8:45 a.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, markup on H.R. 2810, the “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018”, 10:30 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Personnel, markup on H.R. 2810, the “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018”, 11:30 a.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, markup on H.R. 2810, the “National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018”, 12:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Student Safety in the Job Corps Program”, 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy, markup on legislation on Hydropower Policy Modernization Act of 2017; legislation on Enhancing State Energy Security Planning and Emergency Preparedness Act; H.R. 2786, to amend the Federal Power Act with respect to the criteria and process to qualify a qualifying conduit hydropower facility; H.R. 2883, the “Promoting Cross-Border Energy Infrastructure Act”; and H.R. 2910, the “Promoting Interagency Coordination for Review of Natural Gas Pipelines Act”, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, hearing entitled “Juvenile Justice Reform in the Modern Era”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Examining the Department of the Interior’s

Spending Priorities and the President's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Proposal", 9:30 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Full Committee, to begin markup on H.R. 218, the "King Cove Road Land Exchange Act"; H.R. 289, the "Guides and Outfitters Act"; H.R. 597, the "Lytton Rancheria Homelands Act of 2017"; H.R. 954, to remove the use restrictions on certain land transferred to Rockingham County, Virginia, and for other purposes; H.R. 1107, the "Pershing County Economic Development and Conservation Act"; H.R. 1306, the "Western Oregon Tribal Fairness Act"; H.R. 1397, to authorize, direct, facilitate, and expedite the transfer of administrative jurisdiction of certain Federal land, and for other purposes; H.R. 1399, the "American Soda Ash Competitiveness Act"; H.R. 1404, the "Pascua Yaqui Tribe Land Conveyance Act"; H.R. 1541, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire certain property related to the Fort Scott National Historic Site in Fort Scott, Kansas, and for other purposes; H.R. 1719, the "John Muir National Historic Site Expansion Act"; H.R. 1731, the "RECLAIM Act of 2017"; H.R. 1913, the "Clear Creek National Recreation Area and Conservation Act"; H.R. 1927, the "African American Civil Rights Network Act of 2017"; H.R. 2053, the "Mining School Enhancement Act"; H.R. 2156, the "Saint Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Act"; H.R. 2370, the "Escambia County Land Conveyance Act"; H.R. 2425, the "Public Lands Telecommunications Act"; H.R. 2936, the "Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017"; H.R. 2937, the "Communi-

nity Reclamation Partnerships Act"; H.R. 2939, the "Water Rights Protection Act of 2017"; and S. 249, to provide that the pueblo of Santa Clara may lease for 99 years certain restricted land, and for other purposes, 4 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 2763, the "Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Improvements Act of 2017", 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy, and Trade, hearing entitled "Improving Broadband Deployment: Solutions for Rural America", 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, hearing entitled "Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: Challenges and Opportunities for Intercity Passenger Rail Service", 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled "FY 2018 Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for the Veterans Health Administration", 2 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Full Committee, hearing entitled "U.S. Trade Policy Agenda", 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Ongoing Intelligence Activities: FY 18 Budget Request", 9 a.m., HVC-304. This hearing will be closed.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

11 a.m., Thursday, June 22

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Marshall Billingslea, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorist Financing, post-cloture.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, June 22

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of H.R. 2842—Accelerating Individuals into the Workforce (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of the following measure under suspension of the Rules: H.R. 2353—Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act.

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