

among Congress's top three priorities; 83 percent say Congress should spend more time addressing the national debt; 62 percent expect the national debt crisis to get worse in the next few years.

Some of my colleagues may believe we have no obligation to handle the American people's money responsibly. They might still claim that Congress can get its fiscal act together on its own or they may deny that the American people should be able to set the fiscal rules for the government they elect, using the Constitution that belongs to them.

Those colleagues should remember what the American people think about Congress. Disapproval of this institution is 83 percent today, higher than 98 percent of the time since the early 1970s. The percentage of Americans with very little or no confidence at all in Congress is the highest since Gallup started asking in May of 1973.

I am continually amazed at the wisdom and foresight of America's Founders. Thomas Jefferson was right in 1798 that one of the most effective ways of keeping the Federal Government within constitutional principles is to require a balanced budget. The Appropriations Committee was right in 1947 that Congress will not balance its budget unless the Constitution requires it. After seven more decades of attempting to tackle the debt by will-power or legislation, the crisis is worse than ever.

Continued failure is not an option, and there is only one solution. We must act before it is too late.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 2028, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 96, H.R. 2028, a bill making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11:30 a.m. will be controlled by the majority. The Senator from West Virginia.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate came together in a bipartisan way to pass the National Defense Authorization Act conference report. This important legislation au-

thorizes vital resources for our Nation's troops, our wounded warriors, and their families.

This NDAA provides for our national security needs and will meet our commitments to our allies. The defense funding bill also includes programs that will directly benefit the West Virginia National Guard, including our partnership program with Peru and the Drug Interdiction and Counter-Drug Program to fight the wave of prescription drug abuse that is all over our States and our State in particular.

This bill provides funding for STARBASE—I visited STARBASE just recently—an innovative program that provides hands-on learning opportunities for students in science, technology, and mathematics, and helps spur their interest in STEM. They were really excited that day.

On Monday when I visited the 167th Air Lift Wing in Martinsburg, I enjoyed the opportunity to personally meet and thank our servicemembers and learn about the challenges they face. These brave men and women deserve our unified support and should not be subject to the gridlock that has been too common in Washington.

Unbelievably to me, though, the President has threatened to veto this bipartisan legislation, even though it authorizes the same amount of spending for national defense that he asked for in his budget submission. Just recently the administration authorized tens of billions of dollars for Iran through sanctions relief, including money that will be used admittedly to further destabilize the Middle East. Now the President is threatening to veto funding authorization for our own troops.

We face great and growing threats to our national security. ISIS continues to advance. Syria's ongoing civil war is creating a flood of refugees in Europe, Russia is increasing its influence in the Middle East, and Iran will gain strength due to the sanctions relief granted in the nuclear agreement. It would be a mistake for the President to veto this funding for our national defense.

As the Washington Post editorialized this weekend, "American presidents rarely veto national defense authorization bills, since they are, well, vital to national security."

The editorial continues, "Refusing to sign this bill would make history, but not in a good way."

This is not the legacy the President wants to leave behind. He should reconsider his position and follow the lead of the 70 Senators who voted yesterday—including 21 Democrats—to put our national security before politics.

The Senate is now considering another bipartisan bill that has important implications to our national security. The Energy and Water appropriations bill funds programs that help us use our energy resources in the most efficient way possible.

I serve on the Appropriations Committee. I saw the bipartisan work that

occurred between the chair and the ranking member. Continued innovation in our energy resources, whether it is coal, natural gas or oil, is absolutely a strategic asset to our national energy independence.

The benefit of innovation in our energy sector is reflected in the vast reserves of shale gas that are now being produced in West Virginia and elsewhere across the country. It was less than a decade ago, when I came to Congress, many of us were worried about a shortage of natural gas. Today, natural gas production is surging. In West Virginia alone, production has increased by over 500 percent in the last decade. It is exciting to watch. An energy economy is a jobs economy.

Not only does shale gas help us meet our domestic energy needs, we have an opportunity to expand our LNG exports, creating more jobs at home while helping to meet the energy and security needs of our allies in Europe and Japan.

Innovation and investment in clean coal technologies, not across-the-board regulation, should be our focus. The Energy and Water appropriations bill includes \$610 million in fossil fuel development. This is a necessary investment in entities such as the National Energy and Technology Lab in Morgantown, so that they can use these dollars to develop the technologies to make coal, oil, and natural gas production cleaner and more efficient.

I strongly disagree with EPA regulations that require the use of technology that is not commercially available. That is what we see in these regulations. They increase the cost of energy and they decrease the reliability of electricity grid. The best way to provide that energy and improve our environment is to invest in the technologies that will help us and use those coal reserves in the most efficient way possible.

This bill also provides important funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission. West Virginia is the only State that is completely within the boundaries of the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the ARC plays an important role in helping West Virginians meet our economic challenges. The funding provided in this bill can help ARC promote rural broadband—something I talk a lot about on the floor of the Senate—and will expand rural health care services and offer opportunity to our State's workers.

Investments made in the Army Corps of Engineers through this bill will help provide the infrastructure we need to make sure American products can move to markets across the country and around the world.

The Energy and Water appropriations bill impacts every American. It was carefully crafted, robustly debated in committee, and passed the full Appropriations Committee with bipartisan support.

Mr. President and my fellow Members of the Senate, the Appropriations

Committee did its part. We passed all 12 government funding bills for the first time since 2009. Nine of these bills had bipartisan support. So far Democrats have chosen twice to block debate on the Department of Defense appropriations. Last week, the Democrats blocked debate on the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. That obstruction is the reason the government is continuing to operate on a continuing resolution.

Let's get the bills on the floor. Let's debate them, make changes, and then vote again. That is what we are supposed to be doing. None of us was sent here to pass short-term continuing resolutions and allow the government to operate on autopilot. Let's do our job. That is what we are sent here for. We are here to advocate for our State and national priorities, and this Energy and Water bill reflects those priorities. The full Senate should have an opportunity to debate this bill, offer amendments to improve it, and pass a bill that will lead to energy security and improve our infrastructure. By contrast, voting to filibuster this and other appropriations bills will make the threat of a government shutdown more likely.

Americans deserve a government that makes wise and strategic investments to best meet our needs. Endless continuing resolutions are not the most effective way to meet those needs and can prove wasteful in dollars and time. I ask my colleagues to allow debate on this important legislation to move forward and to support investments in our energy and infrastructure priorities.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise reluctantly to acknowledge that I am going to vote in opposition to moving to cloture on this Energy and Water appropriations bill—reluctant because I have supported every single movement to go to the appropriations act because that is what the Senate should be doing. However, I will not reluctantly but will passionately object for the following reason: included in this energy and water report is language that was circuitously placed into the bill that would disadvantage my State of Georgia and show a preference to other States that surround it. It is not our job as Members of the Senate to circuitously write language into a bill that directs what policy this country may seek to follow.

My State, Florida, and Alabama have been in litigation for 30 years over what is called the water wars in the ACF and the ACT Basins. There has been litigation and cases have been dismissed from the courts. We have settled law in terms of the disposition and responsibility of the Corps of Engineers.

It is my responsibility, as a representative of my State, to do what is

right, but it is also my responsibility to ask you the rhetorical question as follows: Should any Member of the Senate be able in any way possible to circuitously place language into a bill that would disadvantage one State or advantage another without debate or without direction? If we become that type of a body in the Senate, we are no longer the most liberating body in the world; we are the most punitive body in the world.

I appreciate the job the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee has done in writing this bill, I appreciate the appropriations that benefit the State of Georgia, but I do not appreciate the use of an appropriations bill to direct the actions of the Corps of Engineers to disadvantage my State and advantage another State without debate, without any degree of direction, and in total conflict with the courts' decisions in the past. So I reluctantly will vote no on moving forward on cloture until we remove this language from the underlying bill.

I yield to the Senator from Georgia, Mr. PERDUE.

Mr. PERDUE. I thank the Senator.

Mr. President, the bill before us, the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 2015, is an important bill, and I appreciate Senator ISAKSON's leadership in this matter. I hope this bill can be considered again in the near future but under different circumstances.

This bill currently contains language that you just heard that would prevent the Army Corps of Engineers from updating the Master Water Control Manual for the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa River system. By blocking updates to the water control manual, this bill would give Alabama the power to veto any plan by the Army Corps of Engineers to use Federal projects to accommodate both States' water supply needs.

When we look at what is really happening, it should concern every Member of this body as well as every person in the United States. For the last 30 years, as the Senator just mentioned, the States of Georgia and Alabama have been in litigation about the use of water in the ACT River system. In instances like this, the court system is the best way to resolve these issues between the States, not the body we are in today. Instead, the senior Senator from Alabama has chosen to insert specific language in this bill to litigate this issue in the Senate instead of the courts. As anyone can imagine, with nearly 30 years of court cases and 60 years of water rights issues, the line between who is right and who is wrong can sometimes get blurry, but the fact is the Senate should not be intervening in a dispute between the States. This is an issue that should be decided by the courts, and the Senate certainly should not allow one Senator to invalidate progress on a multi-State water issue problem.

Several attempts have been made to get the Governors of Alabama, Georgia,

and Florida to get together and once and for all solve this issue.

I want to applaud today Georgia's Governor, Nathan Deal, for his recent attempts to solve this issue and hope that one day we will reach a resolution to this problem that meets everybody's needs. But for now, it seems incredibly shortsighted to force any party in the negotiating process to give in and to tip the scales in one State's favor.

I have had my fair share of negotiations in my career, just as the senior Senator from Georgia has in his business career. I can tell you that forced negotiations never end well for anybody involved. I also know that the citizens of Georgia are not in favor of prolonging this issue any further. I know, Senator, that many of our colleagues in Georgia and many of our colleagues here don't like to be forced to decide issues between the States they don't represent.

With that, Senator, it appears that this bill incentivizes the State of Alabama not to negotiate, causing our colleagues to adjudicate this matter without all the facts.

I ask the Senator, can you give us your interpretation of this language one last time here? I appreciate the Senator's leadership on this.

Mr. ISAKSON. I thank the Senator for his leadership. Without reservation, the language benefits one State to the detriment of another. It is not the responsibility of the Senate to do so. It is inappropriate. I would ask this question of every Member of the Senate: If we became a body of equal representation, two Senators per State, that could secure that they write language into appropriations bills that disadvantages another State, would you want to be a part of that body or would you rather be a part of a body that debates, delegates, and then does what is right for the citizens of the United States of America and right for those they represent?

I appreciate very much the hard work of the Appropriations subcommittee. They have done a good job. We appreciate the priorities that Georgia has gotten. But I don't appreciate a body or the attempt to make this body a court of arbitration between somebody with seniority or somebody with cash versus somebody without, or somebody with a preference versus somebody without. We need to get back to the business of debating and doing what is right for America, not disadvantaging our neighbors or advantaging ourselves over someone else, other than to negotiate what is right for the country and right for the people we represent.

I commend the Senator from Georgia and appreciate his wholehearted support in this. I am going to ask every Member of the Senate to vote no on moving forward on the Energy and Water appropriations bill until the language advantaging one State over another is removed.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

MENTAL HEALTH REFORM ACT OF 2015

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I am deeply saddened by the terrible tragedy that occurred in Roseburg, OR, last week that resulted in the loss of nine lives and injured many more. My heart goes out to the victims and their families, who are struggling to understand this senseless act of violence and are shouldering incomprehensible grief. Roseburg, Newtown, Aurora, Virginia Tech, the Navy Yard—these mass shootings are examples of tragedies that our country has experienced far too often.

The common thread that runs through all of these acts of violence is untreated or undertreated severe mental illness. The shootings in Roseburg should serve as a wake-up call that it is time—indeed, it is past time—for a comprehensive overhaul of America's mental health system.

A serious flaw in our current system is that it is simply far too difficult for families to get help for their adult children who are suffering from severe mental illness. Over the past several months, it has been my privilege to get to know Joe Bruce from Caratunk, ME.

Motivated by his own family's tragic experience, Joe has become a powerful advocate for mental health reform.

Let me share with you and with my other colleagues Joe's tragic story. In 2006, Joe's 24-year old son Will, who had a history of severe and persistent mental illness, was discharged from a psychiatric hospital and returned home without the benefits of any medication. Will had been advised that without his consent, his parents had no right to participate in his treatment or to have access to his medical records.

Will believed that there was nothing wrong with him and that he was not mentally ill, which can be characteristic of some individuals with severe bipolar disorder or paranoid schizophrenia. Will would not consent to his parents' involvement with his treatment, and because he was an adult, his father Joe and his wife Amy were barred from all access to his treatment or his medical records.

Tragically, the fears that Amy and Joe had voiced to Will's doctors that Will would hurt or kill someone came true. On June 20, 2006, Joe returned home to find the body of his wife Amy. His son Will was in a deep state of psychosis and, believing his mother to be involved with Al Qaeda, murdered her with a hatchet.

Because of that tragedy, Will was committed to the same psychiatric hospital, which had previously discharged him, by a criminal court. He is now doing well because he is getting the treatment and care he should have

had before. As his father says: "Ironically and horribly, Will was only able to get treatment by killing his mother."

Joe also introduced me to a group of families from Maine, who are part of a group known as the Families of the 4%, a reference to the segment of our population that suffers from severe mental illness. All of them spoke of similar difficulties in getting needed treatment and care for their adult children suffering from severe mental illness.

This group of parents was distressed, exhausted, and so worried about their loved ones. One mother told me that she had made more than 60 calls seeking help for her son, whom she believed was dangerous.

Another mother described her son chasing her around the kitchen table with a butcher knife. A few of these families had more uplifting stories, because they had finally been able to get needed help for their children. One mother told me about her son who is currently receiving treatment and is in stable condition after being hospitalized more than 30 times in 10 years and spending time homeless and in jail.

Another father told me about his son who had been hospitalized more than a dozen times but is now living in an apartment and able to hold a part-time job because he too is finally receiving the care he needs.

While millions of Americans suffer from mental illness, only a very small number engage in unspeakable acts of violence against themselves or others. Yet many of the tragedies that we have witnessed in recent years—these mass shootings—might have been prevented had the proper resources been in place to support a timely diagnosis, early intervention, and effective treatment for those struggling with severe mental illness.

That is why I have joined with my colleagues, Senator and Dr. CASSIDY and Senator MURPHY, in sponsoring the Mental Health Reform Act of 2015. This bill is patterned on a bill that has been introduced by Congressman TIM MURPHY, a clinical psychologist in the House of Representatives. It will make critical reforms to address a lack of resources, to enhance coordination, and to develop real solutions to improve outcomes for families dealing with mental illness.

My hope is that this most recent tragedy in Oregon will provide an impetus for the Senate to consider our bipartisan bill, which has been endorsed by so many mental health groups, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the American Psychological Association, and the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems. Passage of this comprehensive, bipartisan legislation would help to jumpstart the much-needed conversation in this country about how to better care for people living with severe mental illness and to help their loved ones.

This bill addresses one facet, but a significant and ignored one, of the

problem of mass shootings. I will continue to support other actions, such as the gun purchase background checks proposed by Senator MANCHIN and Senator TOOMEY. I hope we can come together to pass both bills to help lessen the chance that other families will have to endure the loss of a loved one to a mass shooting.

I urge all of our colleagues to join Senator CASSIDY, Senator MURPHY, and me in cosponsoring this important legislation to strengthen our mental health system, to help ensure that others in this country do not suffer, as far too many families have done, because of adult children suffering from severe mental illness.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SAFE COMMUNITIES ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I know the President is traveling to Oregon tomorrow. There is a lot of focus, and appropriately so, on the tragedy that occurred last Thursday afternoon in Oregon. I want to start out my remarks this morning by offering, again, our deepest condolences and heartfelt prayers to the families and friends who suffered so much in what seems like a senseless act of violence.

Perhaps stating the obvious, that it is terrible for our Nation to experience yet another tragedy like this, what I hope is that we don't become numb to hearing these reports so we end up being frozen into inaction or dysfunction but that we actually look for ways to try to work together to try to make some progress to deal with the root causes of incidents like this.

For the family and friends of those who lost loved ones last week—like so many others who have lost children, their friends, and siblings in one of these shootings—we know the emotions are still raw and real. So it is with great deference to those who have suffered this loss that I wish to discuss what I believe to be one of the major contributing factors to these seemingly senseless acts of violence that have occurred across the country, and I will talk a little bit about some legislation which I have introduced which I think will actually help us address one of those root causes.

The legislation I have introduced is called the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act. I believe it would bring real change to our Nation and provide help to those struggling with mental illness. This bill would empower families with more options for their loved ones. I think about the mother of Adam Lanza, the shooter at Sandy Hook, and how she knew her son was suffering from mental illness, but basically she didn't have any options other than to let him continue to descend and become sicker and sicker or to go to court and seek an involuntary commitment for a temporary period of time.

So to make sure that families like Adam Lanza's and like the mother of

the Oregon shooter—she said her son seemed to be doing fine as long as he took his medication, but when he quit taking his medication, he would become a real problem because he would get sicker and act out.

The legislation I have introduced attempts to strengthen the safety of our communities by providing families with more options when it comes to treating people with mental illness and treating them different from common criminals.

We know the majority of inmates at our jails in America are people with mental illness. They may have committed some petty crime because of their mental illness, and frequently, because of their attempts to self-medicate with drugs or alcohol, they get in trouble with the law. But rather than just lock them up, wouldn't it be so much better if we could get at the root causes of their mental illness and the reason they show up there in the first place? That is actually the goal of some very innovative programs I will mention in just a moment, but the goal of my bill that I introduced in August is to support families before it is too late and to provide a path to recovery and healing for the mentally ill.

Proactively treating those with mental problems is a vital component to reducing the risk of violence in towns and cities across the country. This bill would help the whole community, including families, as I mentioned, and schools. Certainly teachers and administrators at schools are privy to information and know things or suspect things that could be very helpful in providing assistance to families and those suffering from mental illness. It would also help law enforcement, providing them the training to spot the warning signs of individuals who could become a danger to themselves and others.

Many of the provisions of this legislation are based on policies that have been proven effective in State and local jurisdictions around the country.

Recently, I was in San Antonio—my hometown and where I served as a district judge. In August I had an opportunity to visit with those in the San Antonio area who have taken a leading role in coming up with new and innovative ways to approach this issue, including one of the leaders of that effort, Sheriff Susan Pamerleau. She championed those reforms, made our community safer, and provided families with alternatives to an endless cycle of incarceration for people with mental illness who don't actually get their symptoms and the cause of their problems treated.

The mental health program in Bexar County, which is the county where San Antonio is located, is now touted as the national standard for how to think strategically about those suffering from mental illness in our criminal justice system. The legislation I have introduced will help institute some of these best practices at the national level.

This legislation would empower families who struggle to find help for their mentally ill loved ones and encourage the development of mental health awareness programs in schools to help educators identify students with mental illness and provide them with the resources and treatment they need. It also includes specialized training for those on the frontlines, such as law enforcement. I heard in San Antonio recently that because of the training law enforcement receives, they have been able to reduce, if not almost completely eliminate, the violence that occurs when a police officer arrives at a call and encounters someone who is mentally ill. By providing the specialized training, you can deescalate the violence and allow the officer to direct the person to a place where they can actually get some help.

This legislation would also encourage State and local governments to create pretrial screening and assessment programs to identify mentally ill offenders, provide need-based treatment, and develop post-release supervision plans so they don't become a danger to themselves and others.

This bill also strengthens the current background check system by incentivizing information sharing among the States so that law enforcement has appropriate information regarding individuals with adjudicated mental illness in the criminal justice system. One example that is pretty close to Washington, DC, is the Virginia Tech shooter, who actually had been adjudicated mentally ill, but the State of Virginia had not uploaded that information to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System maintained by the FBI. So when he purchased a firearm, it did not show that he was disqualified, as he would have been if that information had been uploaded to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. Trying to make it easier for the States to put information into the system is one of the goals of this legislation.

I hope my colleagues will view this as a commonsense attempt to try to make a significant step forward that will help not only those with mental illness get the help they need but also equip our Nation's law enforcement officers to perform their jobs.

Last week, more than 20 mental health organizations sent a letter to Members of the House advocating for mental health reform, calling the need "urgent" to "improve the lives of tens of millions of Americans, their families, and our communities." We need to listen to them, and we need to act.

I know from reports that some of our Democratic colleagues have said they are going to introduce some gun control legislation that we all know has been tried before and cannot pass this Chamber. What we need instead is a broad consensus to try to get something done that can bring people together, and I believe my legislation can do that by addressing the root cause of

some of these horrific events—again, mental illness.

So instead of calling each other names, as the minority leader did on the floor last week, I would invite our colleagues across the aisle to do something constructive and to work together on this legislation.

The Mental Health and Safe Communities Act is a serious proposal and will take important steps toward preventing additional tragedies across the country. I think many of us understand that mental health reform, generally speaking, is long overdue, and this is an issue many groups in the mental health community support.

I should point out that there are many other organizations that support this legislation as well. Just to make my point about this being consensus legislation, I will mention some of the organizations that are supporting the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act: the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the National Association of Police Organizations, the American Correctional Association, the American Jail Association, the Council of State Governments, the Treatment Advocacy Center, the National Association of Social Workers, and the National Rifle Association. Madam President, I dare say that you won't find a group like that coming together on many issues, but on this legislation, on which we worked very closely with them, they have actually been able to settle some of their differences and meet each other on common ground in a way that I think gives us hope that we can actually get some legislation passed and send it to the President. That will actually provide help to people like Adam Lanza's mother or the mother of the shooter in Oregon, who had nowhere else to turn, under the current state of the law, in order to get her son to comply with his doctor's orders to take his medication. Thanks to the miracle of modern medical science, there are miraculous medications that can help people suffering from mental illness lead productive and relatively normal lives.

I encourage my colleagues to consider how we can move this conversation forward in a way that results in real, positive change for our country—above the polarizing rhetoric and political gamesmanship that tends to characterize too much of what we do here in Washington and certainly on this topic.

Last week President Obama addressed the Nation after this horrific incident in Oregon. I believe his emotions were real, but unfortunately he didn't offer any concrete solutions to the problem. He said, among other things, that making our communities safer will require changing our laws. He went on to say that Congress needs to put forward such legislation, and that what is I have tried to do.

I am pleased that the President indicated his interest and concerns, but the real question is, Will the President

work with us on legislation that actually offers solutions or will it just be a matter of grandstanding? Will our Senate colleagues offer legislation that previously has shown it cannot move in the Senate and render us dysfunctional or will they work together in a bipartisan way to try to find common ground and real solutions? I think that is the question.

I would ask our colleagues who are offering legislation—sort of relitigating some of these issues on which we haven't been able to find consensus—which of these proposals would have actually gone on to address the root causes of some of these incidents in the past? I think that is a very important question because if you are interested in demagoguing an issue, you can talk about that and offer purported solutions which can't pass and which actually would not have changed the outcome. What I have tried to do is figure a way that—OK, given our differences on this issue, how can we find that common ground and offer solutions?

Through this legislation, we would give families a way to help their mentally ill family members. We would help schools appropriately identify and respond to someone with mental illness. We would improve the response of law enforcement and the criminal justice system to make sure that mentally ill individuals do not become dangerous to themselves and others. We would work to help the States fix the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. We would reduce the stigma associated with mental illness by protecting due process rights of the mentally ill.

I was somewhat taken aback and disturbed when I saw a story this morning in Politico: "Dems ready sweeping new guns bill." One of the statements in the article jumped out at me. It says: "Democratic leaders are wary that their rank and file could defect and begin supporting the Cornyn bill." So actually, according to this article, what is occurring is, rather than looking to find consensus or to join together to support legislation that might actually help solve the problem, some in the Democratic leadership are actively lobbying their own Members not to get on legislation or support legislation that might actually pass and might actually work. That strikes me as incredibly cynical and doesn't demonstrate an interest in actually solving the problem but, rather, political grandstanding.

I would encourage all of our colleagues, regardless of where you stand on this issue, let's try to figure out a way to move forward. We have a real opportunity to address the common element found in most of these mass shootings, and we don't have any time to waste. We can do better for the American people and get the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act done.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, following the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2028 on Thursday, October 8, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 123, 266, 267, 300, 325 through 328, 330, 331, and 335; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that following disposition of the nominations, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I have come to the floor to speak in support of the fiscal year 2016 Energy and Water appropriations bill. I want to thank the senior Senator from Tennessee for his leadership in developing this bill, for doing his part to help the Senate return to a regular budgeting process, and I want to urge my colleagues not to filibuster when we vote on it.

The Appropriations Committee passed this bill with broad bipartisan approval in late May. The final vote in committee was 26-4, with all Republicans and 10 Democratic Senators supporting it. That means close to 90 percent of the Appropriations Committee voted to advance this bill—a very strong ratio that we should carry over here on the floor, instead of grounding it with demands for more and more spending.

There is a lot in here that the Senate should like. My colleague from Tennessee has developed a good, balanced bill that will provide funding and direction to the Department of Energy, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Bureau of Reclamation. It will allow the Senate to advance our Nation's energy security, nuclear waste cleanup, flood control, and infrastructure development.

We hear a lot of talk about the importance of Federal energy policy around here. As the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I certainly agree that energy policy and stewardship of our public lands are worthy of our time and attention. And that is one of the reasons this bill should be allowed to go forward. It will support research and development for our conventional energy resources, for renewable resources, for nuclear energy, and for many other promising technologies.

It includes a pilot program for the consolidated storage of spent nuclear fuel, a step in the right direction after

years of stalemate that have placed our Nation's nuclear future in limbo.

It focuses on the legacy wastes from the Manhattan Project and provides considerable funding for environmental cleanup at legacy sites around the country.

It will also uphold our Nation's nuclear security, providing funds for non-proliferation efforts and weapons activities.

But that is not all this bill will accomplish.

It will also fund the Army Corps of Engineers, whose construction projects and maintenance operations are critical not only for Alaska's harbors, but for every port in the country. Dozens of communities in my home State depend on the sea for their livelihoods—it is a source of food, jobs, and income. Without a viable port, many Alaskans cannot maintain their traditional subsistence way of life, so this is particularly vital to our Alaska Native communities.

I don't have time to tick through what this bill will do for all 50 States—but I can tell the Senate a little about what it will do for Alaska.

It will fund general investigations in Craig, Kotzebue, Perryville, and St. George.

It will provide construction funds for Port Lions and fund the Continuing Authorities Program, which allows projects that are needed by small communities to take place far quicker than can occur through the usual congressional approval process.

Operations and maintenance funds will go towards dredging in Anchorage, Homer, Nome, and other cities to ensure their harbors are in good working order and able to handle maritime traffic.

This is a good bill. It spends a total of \$35.4 billion—which used to be a big number around here. It makes important choices and wise choices and funds our priorities.

So if you care about the national lab system or university research programs, you should support this bill.

If you care about energy innovation and nuclear safety and nonproliferation, you should support this bill.

If you care about ports, roads, harbors, and other infrastructure all around the country, you should support this bill.

And if you think the Senate should lead in the Federal budgeting process—if you are serious about getting that back on track, serious about us playing a role instead of being a bystander—you should support this bill.

Again, I thank the senior Senator from Tennessee for his hard work and encourage the Senate to move to full consideration of this important bill.

Mr. CORNYN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that during the Democratic-controlled time, Democratic speakers be allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes each.

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

GUN VIOLENCE

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I come to the floor today to speak on an issue that hits far too close to home for far too many families in Washington State and across the country—in Roseburg, OR; in Blacksburg, VA; in Newtown, CT; in Seattle, WA, where a student at Seattle Pacific University opened fire just over 1 year ago; in Marysville, WA, where a teenager killed four students in a high school cafeteria before turning the gun on himself; and in so many other communities, too many to list.

Madam President, in the hours and days and weeks after those shootings in my State, the community showed incredible resilience and strength. But I can tell you that anyone who has been affected by gun violence understands all too well that all the strength in the world will never erase the pain of the parents who lost a child or the students who lost friends and teachers.

Today I echo the questions I have heard from so many people in Washington State: What will it take for this Congress to adopt simple, commonsense reforms? Why would this Congress hesitate at taking even the most basic steps to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals? Why do we fail to act when children at school and young adults on campus and women in abusive relationships and so many others are so vulnerable to the threat of gun violence?

I know this is a complex issue, but that doesn't mean we should do nothing. It is long past time for us to improve background checks. It is long past time for us to end the illegal pipeline of guns that contribute to crime.

I think it is also important to note that too often those who commit terrible acts of violence needed help and intervention they did not get. To be clear, they represent a very small minority of the many people in our country who struggle with mental illness. But when so many lives are truly on the line, we need a comprehensive approach, and that should include strengthening our mental health care system so that it is available to anyone who needs it.

Madam President, this issue isn't going to go away. I wish it would. I wish we never had to have this conversation again. I wish we had never had to hear about the latest child killed, the latest school upended. I know we all wish that. Wishing will

not make it happen. It is time for Congress to listen to the American people and act.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, Congress has failed to protect the American people from the tragic gun violence that is plaguing our Nation. The mass shooting in Roseburg, OR, was the 297th in the United States this year alone. That is more than one mass shooting per day so far this year in our country.

In fact, every year more than 30,000 Americans are killed by guns. Yet the Republicans have blocked any legislation to prevent future tragedies. It is past time for us to act. It is time for us to listen to the American people, who overwhelmingly support commonsense legislation on guns. Ninety percent of Americans support background checks before someone can buy a gun. Ninety percent of Americans support background checks before someone can buy a gun—90 percent of Americans.

So let's close the loopholes that allow online gun sales and sales at gun shows without a background check. Ninety percent of Americans want background checks. Let's close the loophole that allows already proven domestic abusers to buy guns. That is overwhelmingly supported by the American people. Let's close the loophole that allows straw purchasers to buy guns and flood our streets with them. Overwhelmingly, Americans don't want these kinds of illicit sales with no background checks to be conducted across our country. Let's close the loophole that allows a gun sale before a background check is completed. At least let's complete it. Let's take our heads out of the sand on the causes of gun violence and how to prevent it.

We have the power here on the floor of the United States Senate to pass legislation that pretty much all of America expects us to pass. It is time to end the NRA's vise-like control of this Chamber. The NRA says it is the National Rifle Association. Well, our goal should be, on this floor, to say that the NRA stands for "Not Relevant Anymore" in American politics.

We should do this now. There is an epidemic of gun violence in our country. It is not preordained; it is preventable. I am proud to join with my colleagues in support of these commonsense gun safety measures.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Madam President, I was born in a small rural community where deer season was as much a part of fall as football and falling leaves. I was raised in a household where my dad taught us that hunting was part of our culture in Missouri. I don't know any of my dad's friends, but I certainly know that my father, were he still alive, would be shaking his head about the massacres, about school shoot-

ings—45 school shootings in one year—of innocent children, innocent college students being mowed down. It is horrific and it is tragic.

The American people want us to respect gun rights, but they want us to use common sense. They don't want terrorists to be able to buy a gun at a gun show. We should not be selling AK-47s to terrorists at gun shows. We should not be allowing someone who is convicted of stalking the ability to buy a gun.

That is the only thing we are talking about, the principles of common sense that run deep in my State. Close the gun show loophole. Make background checks more effective in order to keep guns out of those hands that should never hold them.

No one is trying to do anything other than protect the innocent. No one is trying to remove a gun from lawful citizens of the United States, but if we do nothing, if we shrug our shoulders and do nothing when an overwhelming majority of our country want us to try to close these loopholes and make background checks more effective, then we are part of the problem. We really need to look in the mirror at the billions we are spending to fight terrorists who are not mowing down our citizens, our innocent children sitting in classrooms, and the billions of dollars we are spending to try to make sure illegal immigrants don't come in this country when, among us, we allow terrorists to buy guns at gun shows, and we allow convicted stalkers to get a weapon. Fifty percent of murder victims in domestic violence have been stalked.

I hope that Americans rise up and call their Congressman, call their Congresswoman, call their Senator, and get busy because we have to take action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise today to join my colleagues in calling for commonsense action to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people who should not have guns, including domestic abusers, and to close loopholes in existing laws that are now being exploited by criminals who are prohibited by law from possessing guns.

Like the Presiding Officer's State, my State is a big hunting State. We are proud of that tradition, so whenever I look at any of these proposals, I think: Would this somehow hurt my Uncle Dick in his deer stand? Would it do anything to take away the rights of those who hunt, the rights of legal gun owners? That is how I look at each proposal, and the proposals we are talking about today would not do that. I wouldn't be supporting them if I thought they did.

We know that no single policy can prevent every tragedy that has been caused by gun violence, but there is one area—what I call the silent victims—the women and the children who

are killed in their homes every single day due to acts of domestic violence. According to domestic violence experts, more than three women per day lose their lives to their partners. More than half of those are killed—are shot—with a gun. This means that thousands of women—thousands and thousands of women in the United States—were murdered by an intimate partner using a gun between 2001 and 2012 alone. These crimes don't discriminate. They impact people across all backgrounds, ethnicities, and income levels. They are serious crimes, and the numbers tell the story of the work left to do.

I am a former prosecutor. Before I came to the Senate, I spent 8 years running an office of 400 people. We made prosecuting felons in possession of guns one of our major priorities, and I am proud of the work we did. I will say that some of the disturbing cases that were murders, that were shootings, did not always involve felons, but they involved criminals. They involved people who, over a series of crimes, had racked up a number of convictions, maybe in the misdemeanor area, maybe for restraining orders and other things.

I remember one case where a woman was shot to death by her boyfriend. He killed her and then killed himself while both of their children were still in the house. It was ultimately his 12-year-old daughter who went to the neighbors for help. The worst part of the story: It could have been prevented. In the 2 years leading up to the murder-suicide, the police had been called at least five times to resolve domestic disputes. Yet somehow this man managed to have a gun in his hands that day and kill his girlfriend.

Consider the police officer who was called to a domestic scene. The guy there had mental health problems.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I ask unanimous consent for 30 more seconds.

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

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. The man there shot the police officer in the head—shot him in the head. I was at that scene, and what I will never forget are the three little kids, including the little girl with a blue dress with stars all over it, going down the aisle of that church after being in that church a week before for a nativity play with her father. That is what we are talking about, and we are very glad that this proposal will be in the package of proposals along with the background check.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I am very proud to stand up with my colleagues and say: It is time to act. Enough is enough. Close loopholes that are being used by people who are not following the law, unfortunately re-

sulting in death and injury to children and families across the country.

Like a lot of my colleagues, I grew up in a small rural town in Northern Michigan. My family members are all hunters. We enjoy the outdoors and gun ownership. I purchase and own guns myself. That is not what this is about. My family goes through background checks. We don't want people being able to use loopholes and not to have to follow the law. So this is simply about making sure that the law makes sense and that we are enforcing it.

I also think it is very important to stress the fact that we know there are tremendous mental health needs in this country. In fact, Senator BLUNT and I offered legislation—the Excellence in Mental Health Act—before this body that was passed as a pilot project to get started about 18 months ago. If we had the full support of our Republican colleagues in the House and the Senate, we could quickly make comprehensive quality mental health services available all across the country. Instead, because we have not yet—I hope we can get that support. I would love to see that support. If we had that support, we would have more than eight States that are going to have emergency mental health services available, 24-hour services available, so families or law enforcement or individuals have a place to take someone or someone can go in themselves and ask for help—24-hour psychiatric services available on an emergency basis.

That is what is in the Excellence in Mental Health Act. We have begun the process to make sure it is available in these States. It needs to be available in 50 States. We need to make sure comprehensive services are available in the community for behavioral health just as we have for federally qualified health centers.

We came together on a bipartisan basis to extend funding for federally qualified health centers. We now have a new category called federally qualified behavioral health clinics, and funding will be available to comprehensively provide those services in eight States under our pilot project. It needs to be in 50 States.

I welcome colleagues coming to the floor and talking about what we need to do in mental health. We have colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. STABENOW. If I may ask for 15 more seconds.

We have colleagues on both sides of the aisle on bipartisan proposals on a number of different issues. Let's get that done, too. Let's fully fund comprehensive community mental health services. Let's work together on the other issues. It is time to pass commonsense gun safety laws.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, today Democrats, from the most mod-

erate and conservative Members of our caucus to the most liberal, are united around a series of principles. They are principles that are overwhelmingly supported by over 90 percent of the American people—universal background checks. They are principles that are supported, according to Pew, a nonpolitical poll, by 85 percent of gun owners. They will save tens of thousands of lives without impinging on the rights of any legitimate gun owner.

The gun owners know it. That is why 85 percent of them support it. Gun owners don't want felons to get guns. Gun owners don't want people who have been convicted of stalking and abuse to get guns. We know that. Yet our colleagues on the other side of the aisle refuse to move on anything. Senator CORNYN—I know Senator STABENOW and Senator MURPHY and others have done great work on mental health. Senator CORNYN came to the floor today and talked about mental health. First, we want to do things on mental health. We should. It is a huge problem. I would like to see my good friend from Texas support the money that is needed—not a pilot program, but the money that is needed.

The more important point is this: Doing things on mental health—which we should—is not a substitute for closing the gun show loophole. Some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are feeling the heat, but instead of taking the action they should, supporting closing the gun show loophole, they say let's focus on mental health without giving any good reason why we shouldn't close the gun show loophole. Let's do both.

Today we are calling on the American people to create a groundswell. President Obama was exactly correct. The gridlock in Congress on guns—which befuddles almost all American people in every State, purple, red, or blue—is because the overwhelming support of the American people is not translated into action here. We are calling on the American people to raise their voices in the next few months. We are calling on the American people to write. We are calling on the American people to call. We are calling on the American people to tweet. We are calling on the American people to post on Facebook. We are calling on the American people to march and tell Washington: Enough—enough of these terrible shootings that all of us grieve over.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent for an additional minute.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Let's put the other side on notice. We will get a vote on this legislation. We will use all the procedural means in our ability. Once the groundswell occurs and people on both sides of the aisle have to study the issue, they will have to vote. We will do it either toward the end of this term

or early in the next term of this Congress, and we believe we have a chance to win. The American people have said enough. A small group in the House and Senate, who are so unrepresentative of the views of their constituents, will not hold things up any longer. That is my belief. I hope and pray it becomes a reality.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, democracy doesn't work like this. Democracy doesn't work such that 90 percent of the American public can support the pretty simple concept that you should not get a gun if you are a criminal and have Congress ignore its will. Democracy doesn't work like that.

As Senator SCHUMER said, this is really about making sure the American public are engaged at the highest level and are making it absolutely clear that silence in the face of these mass murders, silence in the face of young men and women—predominantly young men getting gunned down in the streets of our cities every day—isn't acceptable.

We are hopeful that over the course of the next several weeks and months Congress is going to hear loud and clear that our silence has effectively become an endorsement for these murders. I know that is hard to hear. But the reality is that when the Nation's most esteemed deliberative body does absolutely nothing in the face of this slaughter—we don't even hold one single public hearing—those whose minds are becoming unhinged start to think that those in charge have quietly endorsed it, because if they didn't, they would be doing something about it.

The outline that we have laid before our colleagues today is reasonable, commonsense, and exists side by side along with the protection of the Second Amendment, and we should adopt it as quickly as possible. But at the very least, we should get started on a conversation about how we can end our silence on this issue.

I live every day with the memory of standing before the parents of Sandy Hook Elementary School on that morning on which 20 first graders were gunned down. I live every day with the thought of a young man, disturbed in his mind, walking in with a military-style assault weapon, and in less than 5 minutes, killing every single little boy and girl that he shot. Twenty little boys and girls were shot in under 5 minutes. Every single one of them was dead because of the power of that gun, because it was being loaded by cartridges of 30 bullets at a time. It is something no hunter needs in order to enjoy his sport or his pastime.

I talked to my first grader this morning as he was heading off to school. I told him that I was coming to talk about keeping guns out of the hands of criminals. He looked at me with this vision of puzzlement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 3 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask for 1 additional minute.

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

Mr. MURPHY. He didn't understand why it was already the law of the land. A 7-year-old had enough common sense to know that criminals should not be able to own guns. As he went off to his first grade classroom—not unlike the first grade classroom that those little boys and girls walked into in December of 2012—I was reminded of the fact that if little boys and girls in a quiet town in Connecticut or young men and women in a quiet town in Oregon are not safe, then my son is not safe either. In the face of political opposition, which is real, that is why we are coming together to say: Enough is enough. It is time for us to understand that without a change in the law, the reality on the ground for those who are being affected by this plague, this epidemic of gun violence, will not end either.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, we are saying today not only enough is enough but also: Rise up, America, and demand action from this Congress, which for too long has been complicit—in fact, an aider and abettor in the mass killings that have taken place at Virginia Tech, Columbine, Charleston, Sandy Hook, and now Roseburg.

If America rises up, Congress will hear and heed that message, just as it would in any public health crisis, and today we face a public health crisis as real and urgent as a contagion of flu or tuberculosis or, yes, Ebola. The same kind of urgency and immediacy in response is necessary—commonsense, sensible measures to fill gaps, close loopholes, and expand existing law to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. One of those principles should be this: no background check, no gun; no check, no sale.

Let us close the gap that permits countless criminals to buy guns because the background check isn't complete within the required 72 hours. One of the 15,729 ineligible purchasers over the last 5 years—people who were barred by law from buying guns—was Dylann Roof in Charleston. He used his gun to kill nine people in a church in Charleston. He was ineligible to buy a gun, but the background check was not completed within 72 hours.

We are igniting and activating a silent majority in America. More than 90 percent of the American people want background checks on every gun buyer, along with other commonsense measures, such as a ban on illegal trafficking and straw purchases and a mental health initiative in school safety. Let us give America its say, and this moment is one we should seize to say: Rise up, America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, it wasn't long ago that towns such as Columbine, Aurora, Blacksburg, Newtown, and now Roseburg were unknown outside their States. But today, these towns have witnessed the worst kind of tragedy: mass shootings, bodies torn to pieces, families shattered. The common element in each has been an unstable individual who had easy access to deadly weapons.

I stood here 2½ years ago to argue for restrictions on the manufacture, transfer, and importation of military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines. That vote failed.

I stood here to argue for universal background checks. It makes sense that there be a process to ensure a firearm isn't purchased by someone who can't legally possess it, such as a felon. Even that bill, supported by the overwhelming majority of the public, failed.

Here we are once again, standing on the Senate floor, demanding action in the wake of another deadly shooting. As frustrated as I may be, I have not lost hope that the American people will rise up and force their elected representatives to take real action to help stop these senseless murders. I hope they pick up their phones and call every Senator, every Representative, and every Presidential candidate and demand to know where they stand.

President Obama noted this week that the United States is the only country—the only country—that so frequently suffers these deadly attacks. Let me quote some figures. In 2013, we had 33,636 people killed by guns. In 2011, there were 146 gun deaths in the United Kingdom and 698 in Canada. In 2012, Australia saw 226 gun deaths. Last year, there were 6 gun deaths in Japan. Our number is 33,636.

We cannot let that continue. Gun laws work in other countries, and they can work here too. There are simple actions that Congress can take to make a difference. An individual should not be able to buy any weapon they want online or at a gun show with no background check. An individual should not be able to purchase weapons and then immediately resell them, without background checks, to criminals. An individual who has committed domestic violence should not be able to purchase firearms.

These are not drastic changes. In fact, all of these proposals are already law in some States. Congress simply must take some action. The longer we delay, the more innocent people, including children, will be killed in our schools, our office parks, our movie theaters, and our streets.

I wish to conclude with a story written by blog writer Glennon Doyle Melton. She offers up a powerful tale, and I would like to read a portion of it.

“Two weeks ago, my second and fourth grade daughters came home from school and told me that they'd had a code red drill.”

She recalled her daughter saying:

[The drill was] in case someone tries to kill us. We had to all hide in the bathroom together and be really quiet. It was really scary but the teacher said if there was a real man with a gun trying to find us, she'd cover us up and protect us from him. Tommy started crying. I tried to be brave.

Glennon continues:

My three-year-old nephew had the same drill in his preschool in Virginia. Three-year-old American babies and teachers—hiding in bathrooms, holding hands, preparing for death. We are saying to teachers: arm yourselves and fight men with assault weapons because we are too cowardly to fight the gun lobby.

We are saying to a terrified generation of American children—WE WILL NOT DO WHAT IT TAKES TO PROTECT YOU. WE WILL NOT EVEN TRY. So just be very quiet, hide and wait. Hold your breath. Shhh.

This is chilling. To hear what our children and grandchildren must endure, even in their earliest years. I wish to say to all of us that we must have the courage to stand up and do what it takes to provide some commonsense protection for our constituents and for our country.

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.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I rise to talk about the topic of gun violence. Time and again we have heard calls in this Chamber for tougher gun safety laws. We have debated ideas that have ultimately fallen short of passage. These were basic reforms that would better protect all Americans, and every time these proposals have failed, more of our communities have fallen victim to gun violence. There are more and more vigils, more funerals, and more questions about how these tragedies keep happening.

Today lawmakers in Washington put forward a set of general principles to guide us as we work to stop the enormous amount of gun violence and gun deaths in our country. These principles include more thorough background checks, which the vast majority of Americans support. They include closing the various loopholes that make it so easy for criminals—not law-abiding citizens—to buy guns, and they include cracking down on gun trafficking and making it a Federal crime.

I have introduced a bipartisan bill with Senator KIRK. The bill called the Hadiya Pendleton and Nyasia Pryear-Yard Gun Trafficking and Crime Prevention Act of 2015. It was named after two young girls who lost their lives when stray bullets from gang violence killed them.

This bill is bipartisan. My main cosponsor is a Republican. Gun trafficking is recognized all around this country as a major source of fuel for American gun violence. Our bill would

finally make gun trafficking a Federal crime. It would give law enforcement the tools they need to get illegal guns—we are not talking about legal guns—off the streets and prosecute those who make money dealing in trafficked weapons.

Right now there is no Federal law that prevents someone from loading their truck in Georgia, driving up I-95, and reselling those guns to gang members in New York. These guns go to dangerous criminals. They are not going to our law-abiding citizens. They are not going to hunters in upstate New York. They are going to gang members in New York City, Chicago, and big cities across this country.

We need to make it possible for our law enforcement to do their jobs. I have said it over and over again, nothing ever happens in Washington until regular people stand up and demand action. They want this nonsense to stop. They want innocent lives not to be lost because of criminals and the mentally ill who can so easily get access to weapons. It is insane that we cannot do commonsense gun reform that the vast majority of Americans and gun owners actually support.

If you, God forbid, are a parent who has lost a child, we need to hear your voice. If you are a member of law enforcement, we need to hear from you about what has worked and what has not worked. What resources do you need for us to help you do your job? If you are a law-abiding gun owner, we need to hear your ideas about how to prevent criminals from getting their hands on guns. If your life has been affected by gun violence, we need to hear your ideas about how to prevent other people from having to live through the horror you have lived through.

The only way we are going to make our country safer from gun violence is through Federal action. Right now, we are stuck with a patch of State and local laws which make it very hard for law enforcement to do their jobs to keep us safe. We urgently need Federal gun safety reform. Month after month, year after year illegal guns tear apart communities in New York and across our country.

According to the last Federal data, there were 8,539 firearms recovered and traced in my home State in 2013 alone, and of those more than 8,500 guns, nearly 70 percent of them came from out of State.

I cannot say this more strongly: We have to make gun trafficking a Federal crime. Give law enforcement the tools they need to keep our communities safe. Stop handing guns over to criminals. We can do this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 338

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I come to the floor to urge my colleagues to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This has been a very important pro-

gram for preserving our outdoor spaces and the beauty of our country. It is particularly important to my home State of New Hampshire, where this fund actually comes from leasing revenues from oil and gas, and so these are dollars that are supposed to be designated for this purpose since the law was passed in 1965. I am very disappointed that this body has allowed the LWCS authorization to expire.

We have a bipartisan bill, which is cosponsored by Senator BURR, Senator BENNET, and myself—the Burr-Bennet-Ayotte bill, which is one that I will seek unanimous consent on in a moment. It has a number of cosponsors. This is a very bipartisan bill. Senator TESTER, Senator SHAHEEN, Senator ALEXANDER, Senator COLLINS, and Senator KING have also cosponsored this bill. This bill would permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

We know from a previous vote in the Senate, we have 60 votes for permanent reauthorization. People on both sides of the aisle feel very strongly about preserving our great outdoors in this country.

In New Hampshire, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has been used on 650 projects, from every aspect of our State—from Sunapee to Ossipee, to Berlin, to Seabrook, to my home city of Nashua, and the Mine Falls Park that I run in every day whenever I am home.

According to travel officials, 660,000 visitors are expected to travel to New Hampshire this weekend over the Columbus Day holiday. We welcome them, but they are coming to experience the beauty and iconic fall foliage of New Hampshire, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund has given them opportunities to enjoy our great outdoors, whether it is hiking, bicycling or hunting, whatever they like to do in the great outdoors.

Protecting our treasured outdoor spaces is not a partisan issue. We should work together on this issue and extend this important fund. I urge this body to immediately take up and pass the reauthorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and to continue to preserve our great outdoors, this beautiful country, and my beautiful State of New Hampshire. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped to preserve our beauty not only in New Hampshire but across this country and our Nation.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 10, S. 338; I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LEE. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I want to be very clear about what it is we are

talking about today. We are discussing the expiration of the Land and Water Conservation Fund's ability to accrue additional revenues to the fund and nothing more.

According to the Congressional Research Service, the Land and Water Conservation Fund currently has an unappropriated balance of around \$20 billion that can be appropriated in implementing LWCF projects. If you assume the current rate of appropriations is roughly \$300 million per year, it would take around 60 years before that fund is exhausted.

Meanwhile, we have both the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and its House counterpart, the House Natural Resources Committee, working on reforms to the LWCF to address some of the issues that are causing a lot of people to be concerned with the LWCF. These issues involve, for instance, the maintenance backlog that we have with regard to many of our national parks and public lands and also with regard to the manner in which the Federal Government acquires new land. This is of concern to many of us, especially those of us who come from a State like mine where the Federal Government owns nearly 70 percent of the land.

On that basis, Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I am obviously disappointed that an objection has been rendered by my colleague from Utah, but I will say I appreciate his interest in making sure we maintain our public parks and lands, and this is certainly an interest that we all share together. It is my hope that we reauthorize this program—I know there are some very important projects that can go forward not only in New Hampshire but across the country—because you can't do anything new unless you reauthorize it.

I am disappointed that there is an objection, but I am hoping this is something we can overcome and make sure we can work together and get this reauthorized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, just to clarify. We have two committees, one in the Senate and one in the House, looking at the possibilities for reforming this program. I am confident we can find agreement on how this program ought to be reformed. That is my goal, and I will continue to work toward that end. I want to make sure we have reforms put in place as we reauthorize this.

In the meantime, I want to be clear: This doesn't do anything to halt the program as a whole. This just deals with the accrual of revenue to a fund that has an accumulated unappropriated balance of \$20 billion. We certainly have time. This shouldn't be rushed through. We need to give the

committees the time they need in order to work out the reforms needed.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I join the Senator from New Hampshire, Ms. AYOTTE. I thank her for her leadership on the Land and Water Conservation Fund. She has been out front on this, she cares about it, she is effective, and works well with other Members of the Senate. My bet is that she will succeed before very long.

In 1985 and 1986, at President Reagan's request, I was chairman of the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors. It was our job to look ahead for a generation and try to see what kind of recreational facilities Americans would need in the next generation. Our principal recommendation was that we fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It was created in the 1960s and has worked with States, as well as through the Federal Government, to create city parks and opportunities to enjoy one of those aspects of the American character that makes us exceptional; that is, the great American outdoors.

Senator BURR of North Carolina and Senator AYOTTE of New Hampshire have been among the most vigorous supporters of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I join with them, and I look forward to their success.

Now, on another subject, Madam President, in about 15 minutes, the full Senate will have an opportunity to vote on whether we want to consider the Energy and Water Appropriations bill this year. We are voting on the motion to proceed to the bill.

I will try to put that in plain English. That means our Appropriations Committee, which consists of 30 Members of the Senate, has finished its work on the Energy and Water Appropriations bill. In fact, we finished it on May 21. We voted in a bipartisan way, 26 to 4, to send it to the floor of the Senate.

Senator FEINSTEIN, who is a wonderful partner to work with from California, is the ranking Democrat on the Energy and Water Subcommittee. She helped write the bill. I helped write the bill. Thirty other members of the Appropriations Committee helped write the bill. This will be an opportunity for the other 70 Members of the Senate to get involved in our first responsibility, which is the Senate appropriations process.

So the question is that a "yes" vote means yes we want to debate the bill.

As a Member of the Senate, I would like to be involved in the Energy and Water appropriations process. I would like to have a say about where we put our nuclear waste. I would like to have a say about our National Laboratories and what they are doing to create new jobs for our country. I would like to have a say about whether we will be first or whether we will be in the mid-

dle of the pack on supercomputing. I would like to have a say about whether the harbors along our coasts are dredged and deepened so that the big ships from the Panama Canal, which is being widened, will come to the United States and bring cargo and jobs here instead of other places. I would like to have a say about nuclear weapons. I would like to have a say about whether to move ahead with a new class of submarines.

All of that is in this bill. All 30 Senators on the Appropriations Committee have had our say, but the other 70 Senators have not. The way the Senate works is this is the time for Senators to stand up and say yes or no. I want to have my say on behalf of my State about national defense and about growth, about jobs, about our country. Why wouldn't a Senator want to do that? It is hard for me to understand this.

The Democrats are saying: No, we don't even want to talk about it. They are saying: No, we don't want to debate it.

That is our job. It is our job to debate it. They say: Well, we have a difference of opinion over spending. Do my colleagues know how big our difference of opinion is? Three percent. This bill that we are about to vote on spends 97 percent as much money as the Democrats want to spend. They want to spend 3 percent more. I actually think this is a pretty good way to appropriate. That means we at least been able to squeeze 3 percent out. And if later on, in a few weeks, we have a way of negotiating an agreement that says we will spend 3 percent more, we can add that 3 percent in 24 hours. It would not take long at all. That would be the way to do it.

The way we are supposed to do an appropriation is to bring the bill to the floor and let all 100 Senators vote on it—not just the 30 who are on the Appropriations Committee—and have a conference with the House of Representatives. They have had their say. Then we send it to the President and he has his say.

Now, the President has said he will veto it because it needs to spend 3 percent more. That is his prerogative under the Constitution. It is the prerogative of the minority Democrats in the Senate to say we will uphold the President's veto because we agree with him on spending. But we don't start the process at the beginning and not even allow the full Senate to do its appropriations job. We go through the whole process and let the President have his say and then we sit down and talk about what to do.

This is a very bad precedent that really insults the Senate. What this means is that if the Republicans are in the minority of the Senate in the next Congress and we have a difference of opinion with the Democrats over how much to spend, we won't have an appropriations process, some might say. They will say: We have a difference of

opinion, and since we have 41 Senators, we will just stop the appropriations process at the beginning. We won't let the rest of the Senate have its say.

That is not the way we are supposed to do our job. We are sent here to have our say on behalf of the people.

Let me give an example or two, if I may. Senator FEINSTEIN and I worked very hard on this bill. It provides a total of \$35 billion; \$1.2 billion more than last year and \$668 million below the President's budget request. The bill is consistent with the Federal law that is called the Budget Control Act. We didn't just make up out of thin air how much to spend. The law tells us how much to spend. That is the law of the Senate, which the House and the Senate all voted for, passed, and signed, and which governs what we spend. Our friends on the other side would like to spend more. That is their prerogative and they can vote to spend more. But why would they stop us from having a discussion about spending more?

Half the bill is nondefense spending that supports scientific research and laboratories, harbors, locks, and dams. Half the bill is defense spending. It funds nuclear weapons, life extension programs. It maintains our nuclear weapons stockpile. As I said earlier, the Senate Appropriations Committee fully considered it and approved the work that Senator FEINSTEIN and I had done, 26 to 4, on a bipartisan basis. Defense spending is higher this year, primarily because of an agreement we made a few years ago when we enacted the START treaty to modernize our nuclear weapons program. It funds several other important agencies, including the Department of Energy, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Nuclear Administration. It reduces wasteful spending because of our oversight. Every year, Senator FEINSTEIN and I cut out of our budget at least one program that we consider low priority. We did that again this year. And if the Senate would allow us to have the bill on the floor and discuss it and vote on it and approve it, we could save \$150 million from the U.S. contributions to the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor in France. But, no, we are not going to discuss that, say our friends on the other side.

The bill helps our economy. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke wrote a good column in the Wall Street Journal earlier this week. He said: Don't count on the Fed alone to make the economy better. We have to do some other things.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thought I had until 12:45 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democrats have 9 minutes remaining.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I am sorry. If I may have 30 more seconds to wind up—no one told me that.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Chair.

So I would say to my friends on the other side, if you want to have a say about nuclear waste, about nuclear defense, about National Laboratories, about flood control, about waterways, and about locks and dams, then vote yes, because that will give you a say and you will be doing your job. Voting no sets a dangerous precedent for the Senate that says we are not interested in doing our job on appropriations.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I rise as the vice chair of the Appropriations Committee to urge my colleagues to vote no on the motion to proceed to the Energy and Water appropriations bill.

I wish to comment about the remarks of the Senator from Tennessee. First of all, I have such admiration for him and for his advocacy for Tennessee, the skilled legislator that he is. He has been an advocate for his State and for the United States of America. He is an outstanding chair of the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development. I know he and my colleague, the ranking member, Senator FEINSTEIN, have worked very well together.

I don't dispute many of the things the Senator said in terms of what impact this would have on the economy. Certainly, if one is the Senator from Maryland, the Corps of Engineers is part of our economy, particularly because of the role it plays in helping to keep our waterways open and able for the Port of Baltimore to be viable and accept the new Panama Canal shipments. We could go through item after item.

We need a bipartisan budget agreement. While the Senator says he wants to have his say, which I appreciate, we have been trying to get budget negotiations going since May. In the committee I voted to move this bill forward because I wanted to move the process forward. I was hoping that the leadership of both bodies would move to a new top line 302(b) allocation and lift the caps. We need leadership on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of the dome. We wanted that five months ago, yet here we are for yet another parliamentary maneuver that just pits well intentioned, hard-working people against each other over process. We need a new top line so we can have a better bottom line for our national security and our economic security.

I am deeply worried that the trajectory we are on is hollowing out our America, that we are hollowing out the much-needed infrastructure that we need, part of which comes from the Army Corps of Engineers, which includes our waterways.

Look at the whole issue of dam safety. Our colleagues in South Carolina now are worried about the rivers. The Corps of Engineers is working 36-hour

days with Governor Haley to really try to help South Carolina. But we need investments in our infrastructure, not only for crisis response. And by the way, of course we are going to stand with the people of South Carolina to help them. We need to be able to cancel sequester, and we need to be able to do it for defense and for nondefense.

In the Energy and Water bill that is before us, the increases are in the defense side. Some of the national security issues have been outlined by the Senator from Tennessee. But in the area of nondefense, it has just gone up a couple of hundred million dollars—excuse me, \$8 million. The bill is short on infrastructure and it is short on research funding.

Now, I believe we should have a sensible approach to spending. I know that we agree with the budget caps, but these budget caps are placing a cap on our national security. They are placing a cap also on our compelling infrastructure needs that every State is crying out for. The Senator from Tennessee knows the requests have come his way, along with Senator FEINSTEIN.

We are also capping innovation. We need to be able to have more breakthroughs, whether it is in life science—we had a wonderful hearing yesterday that we both attended regarding the breakthroughs at NIH, but we need breakthroughs in energy.

We need to maintain our Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We need the Corps of Engineers to have the resources it needs for flood control, waterways, and harbors. My port depends upon it.

We also need adequate funding for the cleanup of uranium enrichment plants such as in Portsmouth, OH, where 500 workers will lose their jobs.

We need to stop talking and engaging in parliamentary dueling.

My hope is to encourage our leadership to come up with a new budget deal that lifts the caps so that the Senate appropriations committees can get on with their job.

I have worked now with our colleague, the full committee chairman, Senator COCHRAN. The Senator from Mississippi, a gentleman of the old school, has done a good, solid job running the committee. As to the chairman that we have worked with, we feel we have good relations. But it is not how well we get along; it is how much we get done. And the way to get it done this year is to be able to lift the budget caps, come up with a sensible agreement with appropriate offices, and then let's let the appropriators do our job.

I wish to say to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, we do look forward to working with you, but when all is said and done, we want to get more done than we get said.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, we yield back any remaining time on our side.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, we yield back our remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

CLOTURE MOTION

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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 96, H.R. 2028, a bill making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Richard C. Shelby, Richard Burr, Daniel Coats, Ben Sasse, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Steve Daines, Chuck Grassley, Susan M. Collins, Thad Cochran, James Lankford, Lamar Alexander, John Hoeven, Roy Blunt.

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 motion to proceed to H.R. 2028, a bill making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 278 Leg.]

YEAS—49

Alexander	Enzi	Murkowski
Ayotte	Ernst	Paul
Barrasso	Fischer	Portman
Blunt	Flake	Risch
Boozman	Gardner	Roberts
Burr	Grassley	Rounds
Capito	Hatch	Sasse
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sessions
Coats	Inhofe	Shelby
Cochran	Johnson	Sullivan
Collins	Kirk	Thune
Corker	Lankford	Tillis
Cornyn	Lee	Toomey
Cotton	Manchin	Vitter
Crapo	McCain	Wicker
Cruz	McConnell	
Daines	Moran	

NAYS—47

Baldwin	Cardin	Franken
Bennet	Carper	Gillibrand
Blumenthal	Casey	Heinrich
Booker	Cooms	Heitkamp
Boxer	Donnelly	Heller
Brown	Durbin	Hirono
Cantwell	Feinstein	Isakson

Kaine	Murphy	Shaheen
King	Murray	Stabenow
Klobuchar	Nelson	Tester
Leahy	Perdue	Udall
Markey	Peters	Warner
McCaskill	Reed	Warren
Menendez	Sanders	Whitehouse
Merkley	Schatz	Wyden
Mikulski	Schumer	

NOT VOTING—4

Graham	Rubio
Reid	Scott

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 47.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MARIO CORDERO TO BE A FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSIONER

NOMINATION OF SARAH ELIZABETH MENDELSON TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR

NOMINATION OF SARAH ELIZABETH MENDELSON TO BE AN ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

NOMINATION OF W. THOMAS REEDER, JR., TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION

NOMINATION OF LUCY TAMLYN TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF BENIN

NOMINATION OF JEFFREY J. HAWKINS, JR., TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

NOMINATION OF DAVID R. GILMOUR TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE TOGOLESE REPUBLIC

NOMINATION OF EDWIN RICHARD NOLAN, JR., TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

NOMINATION OF CAROLYN PATRICIA ALSUP TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

NOMINATION OF DANIEL H. RUBINSTEIN TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

NOMINATION OF SUSAN COPPEDGE AMATO TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR AT LARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider en bloc the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Mario Cordero, of California, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for the term expiring June 30, 2019; Sarah Elizabeth Mendelson, of the District of Columbia, to be Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador; Sarah Elizabeth Mendelson, of the District of Columbia, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations; W. Thomas Reeder, Jr., of Virginia, to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation; Lucy Tamlyn, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Benin; Jeffrey J. Hawkins, Jr., of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Central African Republic; David R. Gilmour, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Togolese Republic; Edwin Richard Nolan, Jr., of Massachusetts, a Career Member of the Senior