

needs, the educational needs we promised them, and to deal with this backlog of disability benefits.

We are not only looking to the past, we are looking to the future. We have made robust funds available in our innovation area, whether it was the Department of Energy or the National Institutes of Health, which is in my home State. On our committee and across the aisle—Senator PATTY MURRAY, the ranking member, and Senator ROY BLUNT, the chairman of the HHS committee—we renamed the National Institutes of Health the “National Institutes of Hope” because of what it does to find the cures and the breakthroughs for Alzheimer’s, on which we have almost doubled the research in order to break the code on how we can find a cure or a cognitive stretch-out. We have added \$2 billion because we worked together, because we know that when we want to find the cure for cancer, Alzheimer’s, autism, we need to be able to do that.

We looked also at working out other compelling needs, such as Head Start, child care and development grants in which we have added more money, and we make the first payment to fund the programs for elementary, middle, and high school.

We also meet the physical infrastructure needs, where we have increased our funding in the T-HUD bill for Transit New Starts to \$2.2 billion.

We increased the funding for the HOME Program. Instead of cutting it by 90 percent, we increased it by \$50 million, to \$950 million.

We have also looked out for our ports, creating jobs by keeping goods moving through the full funding of the harbor maintenance trust fund and the Army Corps of Engineers.

This is about jobs. This isn’t about money; this is about jobs. In my own home State of Maryland, the Port of Baltimore is an incubator for jobs. It keeps people going, whether it is the people who work to bring the ships in, whether it is the longshoremen, the tugboat operators, or those who benefit from the goods and services coming into our port or leaving our port. It is the ports that create our jobs, and we in Maryland are ready for the new ships coming through the newly built Panama Canal. We know this is a big deal that could help our communities all over America if we invest in our ports.

I know many of our colleagues also want to know about riders. We faced hundreds of policy riders, some of which were highly controversial. We did the best we could with them. But while everybody talks about one item or this item, I want to talk about some of the ones we were able to deal with.

We prevented double-trailer trucks from taking over our highways. We protected women’s health against devastating riders. We also made sure those who regulate our financial institutions so that we never have another meltdown like we had 8 years ago are

taken care of, and we looked out for the environment.

The appropriations bills are good bills, and I could go over more items, but I see that the chairman of the committee is on the floor. I again reiterate my appreciation to Senator COCHRAN and his very able staff.

I also want to comment about the other side of the dome. Working with Congressman HAL ROGERS, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and Ranking Member NITA LOWEY has indeed been a very professional relationship. I wish that now, with new leadership in the House, they could function like the Appropriations Committee. Do we disagree? Yes. The Presiding Officer is a member of that committee, and she knows we are ready to duke it out when we have to. But we put it all out on the table. We discuss it. We debate it.

We had an open process with amendments in our committee. We have worked to resolve conflict by actually meeting and discussing with each other. We need the same thing with our colleagues on the other side of the dome. That is what we mean when we say we want to get back to regular order.

Thanks to the budget deal we have now, I do hope that next year we can bring bills up one at a time for debate, discussion, and amendment. I hope we can do that. But I also hope the tone of the Appropriations Committee is adopted. We can make sure we advocate for our States and for our viewpoints, but we can do it in a way that it gets done.

I want to conclude by thanking my entire staff, Chuck Kieffer and Jean Toal Eisen, the staff on the other side of the dome, and all of those who worked for me. I want to recognize Shannon Kula and Rachel MacKnight, as well as Brigid Houton and Mara Stark Alcalá and Jean Kwon.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, I am pleased to recommend approval of the Omnibus appropriations and tax relief bill that will soon be considered by the Senate. This bill is consistent with the Budget Act that was enacted in November. It funds the operations of the Federal Government for the remainder of this fiscal year. It provides funding for the Department of Defense and the State Department, along with the FBI, Customs and Border Protection, and U.S. immigration enforcement provisions. It provides a \$2 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health. It also funds improvements to our Nation’s water and surface transportation infrastructure.

I deeply appreciate the good work and active leadership of our committee’s vice chairwoman, the distinguished Senator from Maryland. She has been a pleasure to work with. She has been very helpful in producing this bill.

I also thank the very able staff members of the committee who have been very diligent and professional throughout this process. They are a credit to the Senate.

Madam President, I urge approval of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 145

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 204, S. 145; that the bill be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 145, S. 403, S. 521, S. 593, S. 610,
S. 873, S. 1103, S. 1104, S. 1240, S.
1305, AND S. 1483

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, reserving the right to object, the bill Senator FLAKE is referring to, S. 145—a bill I support—is part of a package of 11 bills that have been approved by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee known as the lands bills. By the way, of the 11 bills, 7 of the principal sponsors are Republican and 4 are Democrats. S. 403 by Senator KLOBUCHAR is on that list, which includes the North Country National Scenic Trail; S. 521 that I introduced concerning the President’s Station in Baltimore; S. 593 by Senator BARRASSO that includes the Bureau of Reclamation report on their infrastructure assets; S. 610 that I introduced dealing with P.S. 103, which is Thurgood Marshall Elementary School; S. 873 by the chair, Senator MURKOWSKI, to designate wilderness within the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve; two bills, S. 1103 and S. 1104, by Senator DAINES extending deadlines; S. 1240 by Senator HEINRICH designating the Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio wilderness areas in New Mexico; S. 1305 by Senator BARRASSO concerning the Colorado River Storage Project Act; and, lastly, S. 1483 by Senator ALEXANDER that would direct a feasibility study for designating the James K. Polk Home in Columbia, TN, as a unit of the National Park System.

So therefore I ask unanimous consent that the request by Senator FLAKE be modified so that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following calendar items en bloc: Calendar No. 204, S. 145; Calendar No. 205, S. 403; Calendar No. 206, S. 521; Calendar No. 208, S. 593; Calendar No. 209, S. 610; Calendar No. 211, S. 873; Calendar No. 212, S. 1103; Calendar No. 213, S. 1104; Calendar No. 214, S. 1240; Calendar No. 215, S. 1305; and Calendar No. 216, S. 1483; that the applicable committee-reported amendments be agreed to, the bills, as amended, if amended,