

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 493) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. PORTMAN. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, before the Senator from Ohio leaves the floor, I had an opportunity to listen to his tribute to our former colleague, Senator Voinovich, and he was indeed a stunningly successful public servant. I mean, just thinking about any Republican getting elected mayor of Cleveland, it is hard to imagine such a thing, and then to be so extraordinarily successful at every step in his career.

I was privileged to get to know him when he came to the Senate. My colleague from Ohio knew him a lot longer than I did, but I wanted, on behalf of all of us who served with George, to thank the Senator for that extraordinary tribute to his outstanding life.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 2 and a half years ago, I chaired a hearing of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in which the chief executives of the two top rocket makers, the United Launch Alliance and SpaceX, testified on the need for competition in launching government satellites.

Not long after that hearing, Russia began its aggression against Ukraine. These two issues—the threat against Ukraine and the launch of U.S. satellites—intersected because one company is reliant on rocket engines made in Russia.

Defense appropriations bills since then have included nearly half a billion dollars to build a new, American-made engine to end this reliance on Russian engines as quickly as a replacement can be built and tested.

Defense authorization bills have taken a different approach, by putting strict limits on the number of Russian

engines that can be purchased before the new, American-made rocket will be ready.

Our top national security leaders, including the Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Secretary of the Air Force, have warned that laws that halt access to Russian engines will endanger our ability to launch important defense and intelligence satellites.

To cut-off access to Russian engines would force the Defense Department to buy rockets that are not cost-competitive with SpaceX because SpaceX's rockets cannot launch our largest satellites. The cost to the American taxpayer would be more than \$1.5 billion, and it would be a risk to our national security.

As vice chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I believe these costs and risks are too high. Many of my colleagues agree with this view. The chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator MCCAIN, has a different view. He argued forcefully that we should pass strong laws restricting the use of these engines. We crossed swords many times on the floor of the Senate on this issue. Even though we still do not see eye-to-eye on this issue, the product of this debate is better because of it.

The Nelson-Gardner amendment provides the Department of Defense with sufficient time to develop and test a replacement for the Russian rocket engine. The amendment limits the use of Russian engines for competitive launches to a maximum of 18, allows for a responsible transition to an American-made engine, and, consistent with existing law, does not impact the use of Russian engines purchased to support the EELV block buy.

These provisions increase the pressure on DOD and the United Launch Alliance to keep its new rocket R&D program on-track and push them to use only those Russian engines that are needed to support our national security.

This amendment protects the American taxpayer by avoiding billions in additional spending on sole-source contracts for more expensive rockets. It protects our national security by guaranteeing that there will not be a gap in our ability to launch satellites. And it protects our national interests by increasing the pressure to have an American-made replacement engine ready as soon as possible.

I would like to thank the Senators who worked tirelessly to see that this amendment was adopted with a strong vote in the U.S. Senate: Senators NELSON, GARDNER, BENNET, SHELBY, COCHRAN, DONNELLY, SESSIONS, and INHOFE deserve great credit for their efforts.

I am proud to have worked with them on this issue, and I am pleased that we were able to find a responsible solution that protects our national security and the American taxpayer.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today the Senate approved a Defense authoriza-

tion bill of tremendous scope and containing a number of harmful provisions. I was against the decision by the majority leader to end debate on this bill after a period of consideration that resulted in consideration of only a handful of the over 600 amendments filed. Now, I am disappointed by its passage in the Senate. A bill this big deserves substantial, open, public debate.

With less than 2 weeks of debate on legislation that authorizes nearly \$600 billion, I continue to believe that the Senate was unable to properly consider the bill. Not only was more time needed to explore and debate this lengthy bill, during the brief period of consideration it was given, many on both sides of the aisle, myself included, determined that the Defense authorization contains an assortment of harmful language.

This is unfortunate, because the Defense authorization also contains provisions that I support. It authorizes spending to promote our national interests, provides vital resources to our military personnel, and reaffirms our commitment to partners abroad. It also furthers our military readiness through investment in next-generation technology. It is this kind of reasonable content that should be the universal rule for a defense authorization. Regrettably, that is only a portion of this bill.

This year's Defense authorization will once again prevent the President from closing the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. The bill would extend the unnecessary prohibition on constructing facilities within the United States to house Guantanamo detainees, continue the counterproductive ban on transferring detainees to the United States for detention and trial, and maintain the onerous certification requirements to transfer detainees to foreign countries. Regrettably, the bill also adds several new restrictions, including a provision to bar detainee transfers to any country subject to a travel warning by the State Department. This sweeping prohibition is unnecessary and would even include some of America's allies. While this year's bill does contain some modest improvements to current law, the Defense authorization once again fails to provide the Obama administration with the flexibility it needs to finally close the detention facility at Guantanamo. With the costs of more than \$4 million per year per detainee to keep the detention facility at Guantanamo open, I agree with our retired military leaders who tell us that it is in our national security interest to close the detention facility. Doing so is the morally and fiscally responsible thing to do, and I strongly oppose the needless barriers to closing Guantanamo contained in this bill.

Also unfortunately, the Freedom of Information Act, FOIA, our Nation's premier transparency law, is directly