

in Orlando, and they continue to be at the forefront of our efforts now.

We just passed the annual National Defense Authorization Act. It will go a long way toward helping Americans confront global security challenges today and toward preparing the next Commander in Chief to take on the threats tomorrow.

We are now working to pass an appropriations bill that will give the FBI and other law enforcement officials more of the resources needed to track down and defuse threats right here on American soil. As we consider that measure, we are continuing to explore additional tools that can help prevent devastating terrorist attacks, such as tools to help us permanently address the threat of lone-wolf terrorists and to help us connect the dots when it comes to terrorist communications.

Now is the time for Democrats to finally join with us in pursuing serious solutions that can actually make a real difference.

As we said on Tuesday, there will be amendment votes on this bill. There will be amendment votes on this bill. Yesterday, we were prepared to begin that process but were unable to get amendments pending because of the extended floor debate that went on until 2 o'clock this morning. We will try again today to move forward with amendments from both sides, and once there is an agreement to do so, we will update everybody.

So, look, of course, no one wants terrorists to be able to buy guns. No one wants terrorists to be able to buy guns. So if Democrats are actually serious about getting a solution on that issue and not just making a political talking point, they will join with us to support Senator CORNYN's SHIELD Act. It will give the Justice Department the ability to prevent known or suspected terrorists from purchasing firearms. It will protect the constitutional rights of all Americans. It will go a step further as well and actually allow terrorists to be taken into custody if a judge finds probable cause.

Now, that is a serious solution on this issue. Let's remember, however, that this issue represents only a piece of a much bigger challenge. Director Brennan also told the Intelligence Committee today that "despite all of our progress against ISIL on the battlefield and in the financial realm, our efforts have not reduced the group's terrorist capability and global reach." That is Brennan.

If we want to prevent ISIL-inspired and directed attacks, we have to defeat ISIL in Iraq and in Syria. If we want to prevent ISIL-inspired and directed attacks, we have to defeat ISIL in Iraq and in Syria.

Here is what that means. From the White House, it means we don't need another lecture or another threat to veto the Defense bill. It means we need real leadership and a plan of action to defeat ISIL.

From our colleagues here in the Senate, it means we don't need more cam-

paign talkathons like we witnessed yesterday, preventing us from actually voting. It means we need serious solutions and hard work. After all, that is what our constituents sent us here to do.

We may have gotten held back by a day, but now we are able to keep moving forward to set up votes on both sides, just as we always expected.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2578, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2578) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell (for Shelby/Mikulski) amendment No. 4685, in the nature of a substitute. Shelby amendment No. 4686 (to amendment No. 4685), to make a technical correction.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, most mornings when the Senate is in session, the minority leader comes to the floor—Senator REID—and talks for a while, and he sometimes talks about things in the news. So I come today to the floor to talk about a headline in the news today—in the New York Times, of all places—with this headline: "Obamacare Premiums Are Rising, and Not by a Little." "Obamacare Premiums Are Rising, and Not By a Little" is today's New York Times headline.

It is interesting that when I hear Senator REID come to the floor, so often he is coming to the floor to defend the Obama health care law. A couple of weeks ago he came to the floor and he said that ObamaCare is "continuing to work." Those are his words. So today I find interesting the New York Times story with this headline: "Obamacare Premiums Are Rising, and Not By a Little." It says:

Even in urban areas where competition was expected to be brisk and the risk pool young and healthy—

"Expected" is the key word there—

insurers appear to be struggling. In 14 major cities, insurers are asking for 2017 increases twice as big as 2016.

Twice as big as last year—yet Senator REID says ObamaCare is continuing to work.

The next day after he said that, he said that the Affordable Care Act is

working. Well, I don't know anyone who could be a Member of the Senate and could actually be going home to their home States on the weekends and listening to people who live in their home States who could believe that ObamaCare is working.

Across the country, people are seeing how much more money they are expected to pay for their health insurance premiums next year. I just read that story from today's New York Times.

Yesterday's Washington Post said:

Premiums for health plans sold through the federal insurance exchange—

the one that Democrats came to the floor and said they loved and was going to work—

could jump substantially next year—

That was from the Washington Post yesterday—

perhaps more than at any point since the Affordable Care Act marketplaces began in 2013.

Does Senator REID read the newspapers? Does he talk to his constituents? Otherwise, how can he be so terribly confused about the impact of this health care law and the damage it has done to the American people?

So far, 31 States and the District of Columbia have released information on what insurance companies plan to charge next year. The average American is facing premiums that are 22 percent higher than this year. That is what is bringing about these headlines in the Washington Post and the New York Times.

In Iowa, an insurance company says that it wants its customers in the ObamaCare exchange to pay as much as 43 percent more next year. One customer wrote in to the State insurance division and said: "You're killing me."

Does Senator REID understand the impact of this law?

Another wrote in and said: "Who can afford this? It's disastrous."

Does Senator REID note any of that?

In North Carolina, the largest insurance company in the State said it plans to charge people an average of 19 percent more next year.

In Pennsylvania, one company says it is going to charge people up to 48 percent more starting in January.

In Arizona, people are facing premium increases of 53 percent. That is the average increase in Arizona.

So it is not surprising to see a headline in the New York Times today—and I hope Senator REID read the paper: "Obamacare Premiums Are Rising, and Not By a Little."

Well, whose fault is this? Who should people across the country blame when they see these outrageous price increases that affect them at home? Well, I believe they should blame Senator REID and every Democrat in Congress who voted for ObamaCare and all of the expensive requirements, regulations, and restrictions.

So the question is, Is ObamaCare working? Let's use President Obama's

standard, the one that he set for himself. Well, he promised that if you liked your doctor, you could keep your doctor. Well, insurance plans have been trying to cut costs by doing what? By narrowing the network of doctors that patients can see. People are finding that they can't keep their doctors. They have been losing their doctor because the doctor is no longer covered by their insurance.

Well, you say, this is from a guy who has practiced medicine for a long time. No, it is a whole weekend section in the Sunday Review of the New York Times: "Sorry, We Don't Take Obamacare." People who have ObamaCare, people who actually supported the idea of ObamaCare cannot see a doctor, cannot go to a hospital because of this health care law.

President Obama said if you liked your insurance, you could keep your insurance. Well, can you? Ninety-two thousand people in Colorado are losing their insurance plan because companies are pulling out of the State. Twenty-two thousand people in Ohio are now scrambling to find new health insurance because the co-op they were in went broke last month.

The health care law actually created 23 different co-ops; 13 of them have gone out of business.

Over the past couple of years, 745,000 Americans who were promised by Barack Obama that if they like their insurance they can keep it lost their insurance because their co-ops have closed down, just under the health care law. President Obama promised—it is his standard—that under his health care law, the average family would see their health care rates go down by \$2,500 per year. Anyone who wants to know if ObamaCare is working should ask one simple question: Did your health insurance rates go down by \$2,500? That is the standard the Democrats should be held to.

Now we know that ObamaCare did take millions of people and put them into Medicaid, which is a failed system, a broken system. Many refer to it as a second-class citizen. It is hard to see a doctor, hard to get care. It took other people and gave them big taxpayer subsidies, paid for by the American taxpayers, to help them afford the high premiums—the subsidies helped them afford the high premiums for this overpriced ObamaCare insurance, but those people will tell you that it left them with deductibles and copays so high that they can't actually use the insurance. For millions of other Americans, there are no subsidies—just enormous bills.

The President says: Don't worry, you are going to get a subsidy. But let's take a look at how many people will get subsidies and how many will get none who happen to be buying insurance through the exchanges. According to the Congressional Budget Office—the people who look into this—there are 12 million Americans who get some sort of subsidy to buy ObamaCare in-

surance. The premiums go up, the subsidies go up, but that is a bill that hits the taxpayers, the hard-working men and women in the country who pay their taxes year in and year out.

So that is 12 million, but there are another 12 million—an equal number of people—who have to buy this insurance without any of the subsidies at all. So when the President takes a look and talks about these 12 million, that is a significant hit to the American taxpayers and it turns a blind eye to the 12 million Americans who buy insurance without any of the subsidies. They are left to pay the full freight for these enormous premium increases we are looking at next year.

There was an Associated Press story on Monday. I read the story in today's paper, the story in yesterday's paper, the Associated Press headline on Monday—"Rising premiums rattle consumers paying their own way." Are Senator REID and the Democrats rattled by it? They should be because the American public is rattled by it. This tells the story of a woman from Queens, NY. We have two Democratic Senators in this body who voted for this health care law. This is one of their constituents from Queens, NY. She got a notice from her insurance company that they plan to raise her rates by as much as 25 percent next year. On top of this, her plan dropped the hospital network she wants. Well, President Obama promised that she could keep her insurance, she could keep her doctor, and she could keep her hospital. It doesn't apply to this woman in Queens. She says: "For people like me who are in the middle, there is very limited choice, and now that limited choice is going to get more expensive." How do the Senators from New York respond to that? Why aren't they on the floor talking about it?

For most Americans, the Democrats' health care law has meant higher prices, worse health care, and less freedom to choose what is right for them and their families. That is why the polls show that, on average, only 4 out of 10 Americans have a favorable view of the health care law at all, and it is because the premiums keep going up and up without end and are hitting them in the pocket. It is because people are also paying higher deductibles and higher copayments just to see a doctor.

The Kaiser Family Foundation did a survey, and they asked about these deductibles and copays. What they said was that for people who have deductibles over \$1,500—even those people who are getting the subsidies for ObamaCare, which the President says is so great—70 percent of them with deductibles over \$1,500 ranked ObamaCare as a poor value.

This is a \$1,500 deductible. The average silver plan in the ObamaCare exchanges has a deductible of more than \$3,000. Insurance plans for next year are starting to come with deductibles

of \$7,000. How can the President say this is valuable? The people who are getting it—even with his expensive subsidies paid for by taxpayers—are saying this is giving them very little value and is a poor value. That is why this law is so unpopular. That is why ObamaCare continues to be underwater in terms of those who support it and those who oppose it. The average deductible for a silver plan this year is \$600 higher than it was just 2 years ago.

That is why, when we see these headlines in the New York Times today and the Washington Post yesterday, we realize that people all across the country are being hurt by this Obama health care law. One out of four Americans say they have been personally hurt by the health care law—not that they know somebody who has been hurt but that they have personally been hurt by the health care law.

Even for people who are getting the subsidies for their premiums, the deductibles and the copays have been rising very fast. People never get to the point of being able to use their insurance. I mean, that is the real problem with the way this was set up. They have coverage; they still can't afford care.

It is interesting to listen to the President's speech. If you listen to him carefully, he doesn't actually use the word "care," he uses the word "coverage." If you can't get care, coverage is useless, but that is what the President's numbers are. He talks about coverage, refusing to talk about care. This is about health care. People want care, not empty coverage.

But in the face of all this evidence, the Democratic leader, HARRY REID, has stood here on the floor of the Senate and pretended in front of the American people that ObamaCare is working. He has repeatedly ignored every broken promise that every Democratic Member in Congress made about the health care law. He has come to the floor and repeatedly ignored every American who has lost their insurance. He repeatedly comes to the floor and ignores every American who has had to pay outrageous amounts of money for insurance that for many of them is unusable but is mandated by President Obama and the Democrats that they have to buy under penalty of law. None of that seems to matter to the Democratic leader, who personally supervised the writing of the health care law in his office behind closed doors. It is a terribly flawed law, but behind the closed doors of his office, it was written and passed on a party-line vote.

Well, the American people have spoken, and they have given Senator REID's efforts and the ObamaCare health care law a failing grade. Even those with the subsidies say it is a poor value today. Americans all across the country are hurting because of ObamaCare, and Senator REID and President Obama bear the responsibility. How much more do the American people have to suffer before the

Washington Democrats will accept the facts? People want the care they need from a doctor they choose at a lower cost.

Republicans have offered ways to give people what they have been asking for all along. It is time for Democrats to work with us. It is time for Democrats to stop trying to deliberately deceive the American people by pretending this broken health care law is working—pretending. That is what this is all about because it is not working. ObamaCare remains very unpopular because people realize that for them personally, it is a very bad deal. Republicans have better ideas, better solutions. Republicans are offering the American people the freedom, the flexibility, and the choice they want when it comes to their health care.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT OUR
COMMUNITIES

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, as my colleagues know, I come to the floor each week to deliver a “waste of the week” speech. My concern over excessive government spending and spending on nonessential programs in wasteful ways needs to be shared with the American people, and my colleagues need to know that a lot of hard-earned tax dollars are wasted through waste, fraud, and abuse.

Some of these have been very serious, resulting in literally billions of dollars of waste. Some have been smaller expenditures but ludicrous expenditures, the kinds of expenditures where people say why in the world does the Federal Government have to do that? Or why—where’s the common sense here? The American people work very hard to earn the dollars they send to Washington.

A lot of them are scraping by to pay the mortgage that’s due at the end of the month, to pay the rent that is due at the end of the week, to get the groceries in the house or the savings to put in the savings account for an education; any number of ways the American people today, as the statistics are showing us today, have less spending money. The average American worker today has up to \$3,000-plus less per year in earnings than they did at the beginning of this administration.

I don’t know how the President keeps going on the airwaves saying things are just great and look how much better we are doing when people are earning on an average \$3,000 less than they earned 8 years after the President first took office.

However, walking over to the floor to deliver this—and this one is one of

those speeches—you can’t make this up. It’s so ridiculous. Can you believe that really an agency that is held in high regard, the National Science Foundation, actually is issuing grants of taxpayer money for these kinds of projects? Normally it would bring a lot of laughs and a lot of outrage over this waste of money.

I couldn’t help but think of what is plaguing most Americans this week, after the tragic shooting in Orlando, Sandy Hook, San Bernardino, and all of the other breaking news and tragedies we have been hit with as Americans. I am having trouble with it, as all Americans are having trouble with it. We are trying to fight toward a solution. I am not sure what that solution is. It is not a simplistic solution. Clearly, in a democracy as free and as open as America, whether it is ISIL-inspired or terrorist-inspired or whether it is just someone mentally ill, someone whose hatred drives their life, or someone sitting in their basement at 2 a.m. Being inspired by ISIS web sites or just simply some of the stuff that comes across the internet, we are facing a tough situation here. But this week seems to be importantly difficult, and we are searching for ways—and the last thing we need to do is to politicize this issue.

We have to address issues to make sure we have done everything we possibly can to prevent the wrong people, to prevent terrorists, from purchasing and owning weapons of mass destruction or that can cause the kind of issues we are dealing with in Orlando and other places. There is not a Member of this body, Republican or Democratic, who has not been impacted by what is happening not just in Orlando but by a series of events similar to this. There is not a Senator here—Republican or Democratic, liberal or conservative—who doesn’t want to find a way to address the situation in a way that would reduce the incidence or hopefully eliminate the incidence of these issues.

We are working through that now, and working through that is difficult because we do want Americans to have the ability and the rights that are promised to them under the Constitution and the Second Amendment, which is to protect themselves. We want to make sure their constitutional rights aren’t breached for their own self-defense.

What do we say to a woman living alone in a neighborhood where there is a lot of drug dealing going on and a lot of random shootings and a lot of home invasions that she can’t protect herself? We don’t want to do that. We don’t want to say to someone who owns a business and wants to ensure that the business is not broken into and they lose everything they have invested and who hires a security guard or someone to provide protection, that we are going to take away that right. By the same token, we don’t want these kinds of weapons used in these mass killings to be in the hands of the wrong people. So we are trying to find that balance.

The best way to do that is for all of us to work together to find that balance, instead of blaming one side or the other side for not doing enough or for doing too little. This is not an easy issue to resolve.

It just doesn’t seem appropriate for me to come to the floor and talk about the waste of the week because that involves something people normally would laugh at. This is not a week to laugh. This is a week to mourn. This is a week to work together to find a sensible way of trying to prevent these kinds of things from happening, and we are working through that. So next week I will come down and do two waste-of-the-week issues because this waste keeps going on, and it is an issue we all need to be aware of because the people we represent are forced, through the tax system, to send money to Washington, and they want it reasonably spent and reasonably used for necessary purposes.

With that, let’s keep our focus and our eyes on the task at hand in respect and in mourning for what has happened in Orlando and what has been happening across our country far, far, far too often. Let’s work together to find a reasonable solution that can take us in the right direction toward preventing these things from happening. Not one of us—not one of us—wants to have a process which puts these weapons in the hands of terrorists or those who mean to do us harm.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. President, it appears there is an absence of Members here, so I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SHIELD ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the past few days, we have been contemplating the horrific shooting in Orlando and asking ourselves how this could happen and, of course, grieving and praying and thinking about the people who lost their lives and their families and those who were injured.

As the Presiding Officer knows, yesterday we had the opportunity to get briefed by the FBI Director and the Secretary of Homeland Security. What we learned is that there is still a lot left to learn and that the investigation is ongoing. But clearly this was not a random act of violence. This is not about somebody going to purchase a gun at a store and then going out and deciding indiscriminately to kill the first person they meet, but then again, neither was the shooting in San Bernardino a random act of violence or the attempted shooting in Garland,

TX, which was thwarted by a security guard. These were calculated acts of terror and a reminder—a reminder of the threats to our homeland from ISIS, not just in the Middle East but right here at home by people who have never traveled to the Middle East but who communicate through social media and online and become radicalized by this ideology of hate, one that results in terrible tragedies such as the one we saw in Orlando.

Sadly, our friends on the other side of the aisle have seen this as an opportunity to make this a political debate about gun control, and they simply are refusing to acknowledge the threat we face from radical Islam. Rather than trying to solve the problem, they are trying to drive a wedge between the American people and come up with something that basically does nothing.

I think one thing that makes people crazy about Washington, DC, is when people stand up and claim to understand the problem and yet offer solutions that don't solve the problem but, rather, fit some sort of talking points or ideological agenda. It is clear that what we heard yesterday from our friends across the aisle has nothing to do with defeating ISIS or the threat of international terrorism or the radicalization of Americans in their homes.

So today I am filing an amendment that I believe will offer a solution. I believe that if it had been enacted beforehand, it may have provided the law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI, the tools they need in order to identify somebody like the Orlando shooter beforehand and to take them off the streets. This amendment is called the SHIELD Act. It would not only stop terrorists from getting guns, but it would take them off the streets, and it would do so in a way that is consistent with our Constitution.

I want to make this clear so there is no doubt at all. Every single Senator wants to deny terrorists access to the guns they use to harm innocent civilians. But there is a right way to do things and a wrong way.

My friends on the other side of the aisle have put forward a measure that was voted on last December, sponsored by Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the Senator from California. The bottom line is that proposal doesn't protect our constitutional rights, and it doesn't go far enough to make our country safer. Under Senator FEINSTEIN's proposal, after being denied a gun for being on some classified list created by the government—lists that are often riddled with errors and include law-abiding citizens—the individual can go home, search the Internet for how to build a homemade bomb or go to the hardware store to buy everything they need to carry out some other sort of terrorist attack, and they are free to walk the streets and to plot that attack.

As I mentioned, my legislation actually does what we need to do to give law enforcement, first, the notice that

this individual is trying to buy a weapon but then an opportunity to take them off the streets and deny them access to a firearm. Their legislation does nothing to protect the due process rights of American citizens under the Bill of Rights and under our Constitution.

Many of us remember that a few years ago, the late Teddy Kennedy cited his own frustration with showing up on a list that was created by the government in secret, only to find out that he, a United States Senator, was on a no-fly list. Back in 2004, he was put on the list and he was denied an airplane ticket. If Teddy Kennedy from the Kennedy family—one of the most powerful political families in America in our whole history—was denied an opportunity to get on an airplane because he was erroneously put on a no-fly list, you can imagine the problems the rest of us would have.

Senator Kennedy said at the time:

Now, if they had that kind of difficulty for a member of Congress . . . how in the world are average Americans who are going to get caught up in this kind of thing, how are they going to be able to get treated fairly and not have their rights abused?

That is a pretty good question. It highlights my greater point that we have to be very careful. We need a robust response to protect American citizens but one that doesn't infringe on constitutional rights.

If Senator Kennedy was placed on a watch list and had trouble getting his name removed, do we have any confidence that average Americans like the rest of us will not have their constitutional rights stripped, with no legal process to remedy it?

In the United States of America, where I was born and grew up, we simply cannot deny somebody a constitutional right without due process of law and making the government come forward and presenting evidence to a judge so that a determination can be made not by the government but by an impartial third party.

The proposal I am filing today will help fight terrorism at home and ensure that due process is protected. It is called the SHIELD Act. It would create a process for our law enforcement officials to actually investigate and look at the evidence. But it wouldn't just stop terrorists from buying guns; it would go further—certainly further than the Democrats' amendment—by helping law enforcement take them off the streets. Under my proposal, if someone who is known or suspected of being a terrorist tries to buy a gun, they will be blocked from doing so while the authorities carry out an investigation, followed by an expedited hearing where a judge can block the sale permanently if adequate evidence is produced. And importantly, if the judge determines there is probable cause to block the sale, they can do more than just block the sale; they can take the terrorist into custody. If we believe someone is dangerous enough

to not be able to buy a gun, shouldn't we do our best to take them off the streets so they don't pose a danger to our communities?

We also learned from Director Comey yesterday that there are additional tools the FBI does not currently have that we ought to make sure it has, things to make sure that they can use, for example, national security letters to collect not only financial information in counterterrorism cases, which they currently can, but also to make sure that Internet providers can provide IP addresses and email addresses—not content. Not the content. That would require a court order and a showing of probable cause. But the fact is, if we are going to have the FBI and our law enforcement officials connect the dots, we are going to have to make sure they have the tools to collect the dots. That is what we need to be focusing on, not pursuing some opportunistic political agenda that will not solve any problems at all.

I believe my amendment could have had an impact on the Orlando shooting because, as we all have learned, while the shooter in Orlando was not on a watch list at the time he bought the weapons he used in the shooting, he had been on a watch list and he had been investigated by the FBI. Unfortunately, they didn't come up with sufficient evidence with which to detain him at the time.

Under my amendment, when somebody who was previously under investigation for suspicion of terrorism within the last 5 years—like the Orlando attacker—goes to buy the gun, the FBI and the State and local law enforcement authorities will be immediately notified, and they can then escalate their investigation. They can go to a judge and say: Judge, we need a wiretap so we can listen to—based on a showing of probable cause under the Fourth Amendment—we can listen to the conversations to see if they are calling people and engaging in another plot with coconspirators.

In this way, I believe the SHIELD Act could have prevented the tragedy that occurred over the weekend in Orlando because this shooter was on a watch list within the previous 5 years, and if the FBI had been notified, which they would have been if he were on a watch list, then they could have escalated the investigation further and perhaps have discovered enough evidence to take him off the streets.

This is a similar proposal to the one I offered back in December that garnered bipartisan support and received more votes than my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. As a matter of fact, we had 55 votes with a bipartisan majority on my amendment last December. This new amendment is a small tweak in modification, but it is a straightforward plan that reflects input from all sides, and it will stop terrorists from buying guns and will provide a means to get them off the

streets but doing so in a way that ensures American citizens' constitutional rights will be respected.

I think this just makes sense. I think it is pretty reasonable, and it is a good starting point if we are trying to address the real threat of Islamic extremism rearing its ugly head here at home, but as I mentioned, we must do more than equip our law enforcement officials with the tools they need in order to collect evidence and hopefully prevent these attacks from occurring in the future.

So going forward, I hope we will come up with an agreement that any response to domestic terrorism must include providing the FBI and other law enforcement the resources and authorities to track down terrorists and take them off the streets.

FORT HOOD TRAGEDY

Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, about a dozen soldiers were in an Army tactical vehicle in Fort Hood, TX, as part of a larger training exercise when they were swept off the road. Nine of them lost their lives by drowning. This was in the aftermath of heavy rain and flooding throughout Texas, and their vehicle overturned as they tried to cross a flooded creek.

As I said, out of the 12 people swept out of the tactical vehicle, 9 of them drowned, but thankfully 3 survived. The nine who died came from all over America—California, New York, New Jersey, Florida, Indiana, and Texas. They were also at various stages of their honorable careers of serving our country and the U.S. Army.

Today, at the Spirit of Fort Hood Chapel, the Fort Hood community is gathering to remember each of them, their families, to offer prayers for their friends and family left behind, and to consider how we can honor their legacy going forward.

I, of course, send my prayers and deepest condolences to those who have lost loved ones. I can't imagine their pain, but I share in their grief. Fort Hood is a resilient place. Over the years, it has experienced a number of tragedies, including the shooting by MAJ Nidal Husein, just to name another one. They have experienced tragedy before, and I hate that they have to do so again, but I know, without a doubt, that the community there that is nicknamed "the great place" is strong, and I hope and pray the service today is a time of hopeful remembrance for those who committed their lives to protect and defend our freedoms.

I thank them for their service, and I stand ready to support the Fort Hood community in any way I can while they continue to grieve the loss of these nine heroes.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate Resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 495, S. Res. 496, S. Res. 497, and S. Res. 498.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

UNITED STATES SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION ACT OF 2016

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 2815 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2815) to establish the United States Semiquincentennial Commission, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion 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 bill (S. 2815) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2815

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that July 4, 2026, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, as marked by the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the historic events preceding that anniversary—

(1) are of major significance in the development of the national heritage of the United States of individual liberty, representative government, and the attainment of equal and inalienable rights; and

(2) have had a profound influence throughout the world.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to establish a Commission to provide for the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and related events through local, State, national, and international activities planned, encouraged, developed, and coordinated by a national commission representative of appropriate public and private authorities and organizations.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term "Commission" means the United States Semiquincentennial Commission established by section 4(a).

(2) PRIVATE CITIZEN.—The term "private citizen" means an individual who is not an officer or employee of—

(A) the Federal Government; or

(B) a State or local government.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established a commission, to be known as the "United States Semiquincentennial Commission", to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the history of the United States leading up to the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

(b) COMPOSITION.—The Commission shall be composed of the following members:

(1) 4 members of the Senate, of whom—

(A) 2 shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate; and

(B) 2 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.

(2) 4 members of the House of Representatives, of whom—

(A) 2 shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

(B) 2 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(3) 16 members who are private citizens, of whom—

(A) 4 shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(B) 4 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

(C) 4 shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(D) 4 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and

(E) 1 of whom shall be designated by the President as the Chairperson.

(4) The following nonvoting ex officio members:

(A) The Secretary.

(B) The Secretary of State.

(C) The Attorney General.

(D) The Secretary of Defense.

(E) The Secretary of Education.

(F) The Librarian of Congress.

(G) The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

(H) The Archivist of the United States.

(I) The presiding officer of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

(c) TERM; VACANCIES.—

(1) TERM.—A member shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

(2) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Commission—

(A) shall not affect the powers of the Commission; and

(B) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(d) MEETINGS.—All meetings of the Commission shall be convened at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to honor the historical significance of the building as the site of deliberations and adoption of both the United States Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

(e) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

SEC. 5. DUTIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

(1) prepare an overall program for commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and the historic events preceding that anniversary; and

(2) plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate observances and activities commemorating the historic events that preceded, and are associated with, the United States Semiquincentennial.