United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2017 *No. 39*

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 7, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL K. SIMPSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, 7 years ago, in March of 2010, the Affordable Care Act was signed into law after a 2-year process of hundreds of committee meetings, exhaustive markups—which I personally participated in—floor debate that went on for days, and, again, back-and-forth between the House and the Senate.

Since that date, despite the, again, bitter criticism by the Republican majority when that law went into effect, there have been 60 votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act; and up until this morning, the majority has always begged the question about: What is your replacement? Again, just last week, we heard rumors that there was a replacement, that the Speaker actually had drafted a bill.

Well, with scenes that looked like it was out of ''The Blair Witch Project,'' we had Members of Congress going around the Capitol opening doors with cameras doing live streams and live coverage, again, to empty rooms and denials that there actually was a bill that anyone could actually take a look at.

Well, as I said, this morning, we now have been told that there actually is a bill that has been filed, which tomorrow will be marked up and voted out of committee with not one single public hearing and, incredibly, with no analysis by the Congressional Budget Office, which any bill that has any impact on budget, whether it is a tax bill or a spending bill, has, as a matter of course, for decades, always been the case. There is no measure which contains more significance in terms of a Congressional Budget analysis than reforming the healthcare system of America, which constitutes about 15 to 20 percent of the American economy and affects the lives of tens of millions of Americans.

Well, from what we have seen so far, it appears there is a good reason that the folks wanted to keep the bill a secret. Again, the basic fundamentals of the Affordable Care Act is built on two pillars. There was an expansion of Medicaid, and there were subsidies based on income for Americans to be able to buy insurance through the marketplace.

In the State of Connecticut, where I come from, we have cut the uninsured rate down to 3.6 percent from approximately 9 percent when the bill was signed into law 7 years ago.

What this bill does is, again, it just basically decapitates the Medicaid expansion. So about 11 million Americans are going to have their healthcare coverage threatened. And those are not just, you know, people on entitlement programs. We are talking about working Americans.

I know a farmer in my district who almost lost his foot from a chain saw accident, who thanked me the other day that he had Medicaid to cover the costs of his hospital coverage.

Again, the subsidies which allowed people to buy plans on the insurance marketplace, well, they basically, as I said, decapitate Medicaid. And they also convert the subsidies from an income-based system to an age-rated one, which means that, basically, a well-to-do person gets the same tax credit that a poor person or a single parent has.

A conservative economist, Avik Roy, just a few minutes ago, issued a statement, saying:

> Expanding subsidies for high earners while cutting health coverage for the working poor sounds like a caricature of mustache-twirling, top-hatted Republican fat cats.

Again, you cannot imagine a more Robin Hood in reverse than a plan that does what this tax credit change encompasses.

And, again, the list goes on and on in terms of some of the really just outrageous proposals that this new measure contains.

For seniors, again, the Affordable Care Act contracted the age rating from 3 to 1 from what existed before; it was about 6 to 7 to 1. In other words, a senior, an older person, could be charged seven times the same rate as a 20-year-old. Again, the Affordable Care Act reduced that span to 3 to 1.

This bill expands the span again to 5 to 1, which the American ARP has already issued a statement, saying:

> It is nothing more than an age tax. It is charging people based on their age, which is nothing that any human being can control.

It also, again, rolls back tax increases, slight tax increases, for high income earners, as Mr. Roy's comment indicates, and worsens the fiscal solvency of the Medicare trust fund, reduces its solvency by 4 years.

Again, the Catholic Health Association has come out today criticizing this proposal. Again, just an incredible array of stakeholder groups all across the country are already speaking out.

The fact that this measure is going forward in committee tomorrow morning, less than, really, 24 hours for the American people to have even a glimpse in terms of what is being proposed without an analysis in terms of a budget score, again, is just an abuse of the legislative and democratic process.

Mr. Speaker, again, we have seen an outpouring of Americans over the last 2 months at townhall meetings—I have had four of them—people telling heartfelt stories about how the ACA helped them. Yes, we can improve the law. There are many ideas that we can work together on. That is what we should be focused on, not butchering the law, which this proposal seeks to do.

THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, for years Americans across the country have struggled under a government takeover of health care. Because of ObamaCare, insurance markets are collapsing, healthcare costs are soaring, and patients' choices are dwindling. Simply put, the flawed healthcare law is failing. It is hurting hardworking men and women across the country, and the American people deserve better.

That is why Republicans promised to deliver the healthcare solutions Americans desperately need. This week, we are making good on that promise and moving forward with an effort that will provide a better way on health care.

After a thoughtful and collaborative process, members of the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Ways and Means Committee recently unveiled a legislative plan that will repeal and replace ObamaCare. The plan, the American Health Care Act, includes a number of positive, commonsense reforms that will help create more choices, lower costs, and give control back to individuals and families.

These reforms will create a new and innovative fund giving States the flexibility they need to design programs that fit the needs of their communities. They will responsibly unwind ObamaCare's Medicaid expansion in a way that protects patients and strengthens the program for future generations.

The plan will also dismantle ObamaCare taxes and mandates—including the individual and employer mandate penalties and taxes on prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, health insurance premiums, and medical devices. It will expand health savings accounts to empower individuals and families to spend their healthcare dollars the way they want and need. It will provide tax credits to those who don't receive insurance through work or a government program, helping all Americans access high quality, affordable health care.

At the same time, we on the Education and the Workforce Committee are working to advance additional reforms that will help expand coverage, make health care more affordable, and promote a healthy workforce.

One legislative proposal will empower small businesses to band together to negotiate lower healthcare costs on behalf of their employees. Another will protect the ability of employers to self-insure, providing greater access to affordable, flexible healthcare plans for their workers. The third will give employers the legal certainty they need to offer employee wellness plans, helping to promote a healthy workforce and, again, lower healthcare costs.

These three legislative proposals reflect a few shared principles. Families should have the freedom to choose the healthcare plan that meets their needs. Americans need more affordable healthcare options, not fewer. Healthcare decisions should rest with patients and their doctors—not government bureaucrats. Instead of prescriptive mandates, we should ensure employers have the tools they need to help their employees afford health care.

These proposals—along with those in the American Health Care Act—are exactly the kind of free-market, patient-centered reforms Republicans promised, and they reflect the priorities of President Trump and his administration. They are the products of a careful process that took into account the ideas and concerns of men and women from all walks of life, and they will now be considered through an open, transparent process that provides policymakers on both sides of the aisle an opportunity to share their views and offer their ideas.

I encourage everyone—my colleagues in Congress, as well as all Americans—to join in this process. Visit readthebill.gop. See for yourself the plan we have laid out, and help us move forward with these positive solutions. Together we can help ensure all Americans have access to the high quality, affordable healthcare coverage they deserve.

THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, we just heard a lot about competition and better and improved markets. The basic problem the Republicans have—and they know this very well—is that the health insurance industry is exempt from the antitrust laws of the United States of America, so they can, and they do, get together and collude. They collude to drive up prices. They collude to share markets: hey, if you are pulling out of that State, I will pull out of this State and cut those kind of deals. They can't be prosecuted.

We had a bipartisan vote on the floor of this House when we were originally considering the House version of the Affordable Care Act—infinitely superior to the thing passed by the Senate which we got stuck with—and it was over 400 votes to take away their antitrust immunity. Is that in this bill? Heck, no. They are the second largest PAC contributor to the Republican Party, so I am afraid we are not going to take away their antitrust immunity—but we are going to have a really free, competitive, and transparent market. You will be able to go out and get your policies, whatever the insurance companies have decided as they colluded behind closed doors.

Now, the other issue here is, for some reason, Republicans seem to have taken and painted a big target on the back of low- and middle-income seniors in two ways. They are going to repeal some very small taxes on people who earn over one-quarter of a million dollars a year. You know, they really need another 4 percent because they are just hurting. Those people who earn $1 million, $2 million a year, they are hurting. We have got to repeal that tax. So that is one of the highest priorities in this bill: repeal that tax.

Unfortunately, that means that the Medicare trust fund will be exhausted 4 years earlier. That is right. The money those very high-income people are paying goes to Medicare, to the trust fund, which is in trouble right now. It is going to be exhausted in 2028. Under their plan, it is going to be exhausted in 2024. So they have painted a big target on seniors. But don't worry, the seniors can go into the competitive—well, not so competitive—insurance market and buy a plan.

But then another little twist and another arrow in the heart of seniors—seniors now, under their plan, instead of a cap of three times the cost of a policy to other, younger subscribers, it is now they are going to jack it up to five times.

Why do you hate seniors so much? What is the deal here? Yeah, the high-income seniors will do fine. But what about the middle- and low-income seniors, those who are struggling to make ends meet on Social Security and others?

Then for some other bizarre reason, they have got it in for Planned Parenthood. They say it is about abortion. Well, guess what? It is not. Federal law has prohibited Federal money from going to abortions for 40 years. It is not about abortion. It is about something

different. It is about breast exams, Pap smears, physical exams, STD testing and treatment, information and counseling about sexual reproductive health, cancer screenings, pregnancy tests, prenatal services, and access to affordable birth control.

Why do they want to kill that for 1 million people, many of whom live in rural areas that are already underserved? They don't have an alternative for those services. But they want to kill that—oh, just for 1 year maybe. Well, actually, they would like to do it permanently, but they are going to say: well, we are just going to do it 1 year and see how it works out, how those million women do.

Then, as my colleagues from Connecticut said, everything around here has to be scored, and it can't add to the deficit—unless it is something they want to do. Now, in this case, this has not been scored. We have no idea what it is going to cost the American taxpayer, this new Rube Goldberg, and they don't have any analysis of how many people are going to lose coverage.

□ 1215

Now, granted, they put off the huge loss of coverage until 2020. They delayed the big changes in Medicaid until 2020. That is when tens of millions of people will lose their health insurance. But there are still going to be a lot of people losing their health insurance a lot sooner, and it would be useful for people to know about that before they vote on it: how much is it going to cost the taxpayer and how many people are going to lose coverage.

Under the ruse of fixing something that is broken that has given 23 million people an opportunity to have health insurance and brought us the lowest rate of uninsured in recent history in this country, they are cutting taxes for wealthy people. By the way, there is a little gift in there for health insurance companies. They can fully deduct their CEO's $20 million salary. Today, it is limited to $500,000. So another tax break for the health insurance industry.

Did they take on Big Pharma? Did they do anything about the unbelievable price gouging that is going on today through the pharmaceutical companies, where someone buys up a generic drug that has been around for 50 years and jacks up the price 1,000 percent?

No, they are not going to do anything about that. We are not going to have more affordable prescription drugs. I don't know if they undid the fix to the doughnut hole that was in the ObamaCare bill.

If they really wanted to do something, they would say: Let's have a national not-for-profit plan offered in a national exchange so that every American can afford health care at a reasonable cost without excess profits to an industry which is exempt from antitrust law, colludes, and pays their execs $20 million and $50 million a year.

HONORING REILLY RENKEN

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reilly Renken, a remarkable young lady making a big difference in central Illinois.

Just after she was born, Reilly was diagnosed with a rare genetic abnormality, along with a form of epilepsy that severely impacts her neurological development. Her parents were told by numerous specialists that she would need support for the rest of her life and that she would likely never read or write. But Reilly proved them wrong. While her genetic makeup is one of a kind, she also has a one-of-a-kind personality.

Despite the obstacles she has overcome, Reilly was determined to be a cheerleader. Now she is an integral part of the cheerleading squad at Glenwood Middle School in Chatham, Illinois.

Cheering on the Titans has become one of Reilly's greatest joys, and her presence on the squad has been a joy for her teammates as well. They will tell you that they wouldn't be the squad they are without Reilly and her positive attitude. She brings life to their practices and they always count on her to make them smile.

Reilly is a true inspiration. She shows all of us what is possible when we put our minds to something. Thanks to her, students at Glenwood Middle School have learned the importance of celebrating our differences.

Way to go, Reilly.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT WORKS IN MAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maine (Ms. PINGREE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Care Act has saved thousands of Mainers from losing their lives or going bankrupt simply because they got sick. Quality of care has improved through preventative care, without cost sharing for consumers. Overall costs have been lowered.

Republicans have had 7 years to come up with an alternative healthcare plan that preserves the progress we have made under the Affordable Care Act—one that would not take us back to a time when many without employer-sponsored insurance or a clean bill of health could get coverage.

But after all this time, they have come up with a plan that will cost older Americans up to five times more than younger enrollees; will charge the uninsured 30 percent more to buy coverage; and it will defund, not defend, Planned Parenthood; cut Medicaid significantly; and still has no price tag.

We owe it to Americans to have an open debate on this proposal, and I expect my Republican colleagues not to forget the millions of Americans for whom the Affordable Care Act has been a lifesaver.

In January, I asked my constituents to share their Affordable Care Act stories. Within a few days, more than a thousand stories were submitted. Some shared their ongoing challenges. I agree there are opportunities to strengthen the Affordable Care Act and make it affordable, but the overwhelming number of people shared compelling stories of how the Affordable Care Act has improved their lives.

I am honored to share a few of those powerful stories today, and I hope my Republican colleagues are listening.

Eleanor from Belfast, Maine, said:

''I am a 63-year-old small-business owner who has health insurance for the first time in my adult life since passage of the Affordable Care Act. The same is true for my partner of 17 years. She was diagnosed with breast cancer this year and has recently undergone a mastectomy with follow-up care. After her diagnosis, I went for my first-ever mammogram.''

The Republican plan puts these preventive services at risk.

Matthew from Brunswick, Maine, said:

''Five years ago, I left a comfortable job with good benefits to start my own business. Those first years were tough on my family. My wife and I were able to put our children on Maine's Dirigo Health, but we had to do without. . . . Today, through God's grace, hard work, and the support of my wife; my business is prospering. Food assistance is a thing of the past and we're actually contributing more in taxes now than we ever did before. We still have to watch what we spend but we're breathing a lot easier. Each year that I've made more money our subsidy has gone down, and that's just as it should be. That subsidy still matters though. If the ACA were eliminated today and I had to buy health insurance on the open market I'd be paying an extra $4,800 a year. That's real money.''

Under the Republican plan, small-business owners like Matthew may not be able to afford care for their family.

Ret, a 9/11 first responder from Rockland, Maine, said:

'' . . . The ACA means that as a self-employed resident of the state of Maine, I can actually acquire coverage with a pre-existing condition. After working search and rescue/recovery at Ground Zero in 2001, I developed a lung condition necessitating costly medication. Before the ACA, I was terrified of losing my job and losing health care because of my pre-existing condition.''

Under the Republican plan, those with preexisting conditions, like our 9/11 first responders, may not get affordable coverage.

Elisabeth from Phippsburg, Maine, said:

''In 2014 . . . my husband died from early-onset Alzheimer's. I was 50 when

my husband was diagnosed. Eventually I left the workforce to care for him . . . and, of course, lost my employer-provided health insurance at the same time. The ACA has provided me with options ever since then; options that I never had before its passage. In 2014 I had three joints replaced; life changing surgeries that restored my active lifestyle and removed chronic pain from my life. These were only possible because I was able to access health insurance as an individual, at a reasonable cost.''

The Republican plan for increasing costs for older Americans threatens people just like Elisabeth.

These stories matter. These lives matter. We must all keep them in mind as we look to change the Affordable Care Act.

OPPOSE BILL REFORMING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. BERA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to urge all of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to oppose this bill that repeals the Affordable Care Act, and here is why.

I stand here not as a Member of Congress, but as a doctor. When I took the oath to enter medicine, like thousands of other doctors, there are really three basic ethics in there:

Benevolence: to do good.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does not do anything good. It makes it harder for people to get health care.

The second ethic was non-malfeasance: to do no harm.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is going to harm millions of Americans. It is going to pull healthcare coverage away from folks. In fact, I have heard from folks who have come to my townhalls and have talked about how the Affordable Care Act has saved their lives. If you pull health care away from them, people are going to get sicker, and some people may potentially die.

And the third ethic is patient autonomy: the ability of patients to make the choices that impact their lives.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does not empower patients to make their own choices. This bill limits those choices. It takes choice away from them.

This is a bad bill that goes against everything that we in the medical profession swear to when we enter the profession. That is why you see doctors standing up and opposing this bill, hospitals opposing this bill, and health plans opposing this bill. That is why, when patients see what is in this bill, you will see American patients pushing back.

If you thought the townhalls have been boisterous over the last few months, just try to pass this bill and take necessary health care away from folks. You are going to see those patients showing up in your townhalls.

Let's talk about some of the good things that have happened in the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act expanded and made coverage for birth control much more readily available. That is a good thing. Whether you are anti-choice or pro-choice, like I am, it is a good thing. What we have seen by expanding coverage to birth control is the number of unintended pregnancies are near all-time lows. That is what we ought to be doing.

The Affordable Care Act expanded access to preventive health services. We know if we want to bring down the cost of health care, let's diagnose the cancer early. Let's treat it and let's save that life. Let's better manage disease.

Let's not go back to the old days where the patient showed up with the heart attack and then we went into action. That costs us a lot more. Let's prevent that heart attack. Let's provide better access to care.

Mr. Speaker, let's not make the President have to renege on a promise that he made. On the campaign trail and after being inaugurated, the President has said that any healthcare legislation was going to expand coverage, it was going to be cheaper, and it was going to be more accessible to patients.

We know this bill that is being introduced does none of that. It cuts coverage. It is going to be more costly for people and fewer people are going to get it.

Mr. Speaker, don't make the President have to renege and go against the promise that he made. The American public is going to hold him accountable for that.

Mr. Speaker, do the right thing. Let's put American patients first. That is what we as doctors do every day, and that is why, again, doctors are against it, hospitals are against it, and health plans are against it.

Mr. Speaker, let's reject this bill. I urge all my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to stand against this bill. It is a bad bill.

DESTABILIZING OUR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DELBENE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, last night, House Republicans released a dangerous and irresponsible bill that threatens to destabilize our Nation's healthcare system and rob millions of Americans of their health insurance plans.

Since coming to Congress, I have worked tirelessly to find commonsense fixes to our Nation's healthcare laws. We should be working together to build upon the reforms we have already made to expand coverage and reduce costs. But what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have put forward would make working families, seniors, children, and people with disabilities foot the bill for their poorly conceived experiment.

What is worse, they are giving our constituents and their Representatives in Congress less than 48 hours to review it before jamming it through committees.

As a former businesswoman and entrepreneur, I am always stunned to see leaders in Congress put forward a half-baked plan like this—one that threatens massive disruption and chaos, released in the middle of the night without any data or metrics to show how it makes literally anything better. In the private sector, that is the sort of behavior that can get you fired.

For a moment, let's put aside the fact that committees are planning to mark up this legislation tomorrow without any data from the Congressional Budget Office on how many of our constituents can expect to lose health coverage or see their taxes go up. Let's talk about the one thing we do know: this bill is an enormous tax cut for the wealthiest Americans.

Through this bill, Republicans are trying to give an average tax cut of around $7 million to the 400 highest-income households—a tax cut they don't need and didn't ask for. They are doing it while ripping health insurance away from millions of hardworking Americans; forcing seniors to pay a staggering $3,200 more on premiums every year, for less coverage; increasing the cost of prescription drugs for middle class families; eliminating coverage for women's health care, like birth control, breast cancer screenings, and maternity care; and decimating the Medicaid program for 62 million children and families, seniors, pregnant women, and people with disabilities.

This is hardly what I would call a great deal or a better way for the middle class, which is what the American people were repeatedly promised by President Trump and Speaker RYAN.

□ 1230

No, their idea of a healthcare plan is a tax cut for the wealthy at the expense of everyone else. When our healthcare system falls apart, we will all pay the price.

My in-box has been flooded with phone calls, emails, and letters from constituents who are terrified about what the Republicans are trying to do. Like Stacie, from Snoqualmie, who got coverage under the Washington State exchange after spending years struggling to pay for health care. She recently wrote to me and said: ''Just last week I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I am terrified—not as much by the cancer, but by the thought that we might not be able to pay for health insurance.''

This bill spells disaster for people like Stacie. As her representative in Congress, I will not stand for it. I will fight every day to protect the reforms that have made health insurance accessible and affordable for her. We can't go back to a time when getting sick meant going bankrupt, and that is exactly what this legislation would do.

HOW LONG?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, my father, James LeRoy Butler, worked as a janitor. He had a fifth grade education, and now his youngest child is a Member of the 115th Congress. My father worked hard, and his word was his bond.

On January 15, 2017, President Trump promised insurance for everyone. He also promised Americans would have much lower deductibles. On January 22, 2017, President Trump's administration promised no one would lose healthcare coverage. But after only a glimpse of his plan, we now know these promises are not true, like so many other things that the White House has said.

The people who need coverage the most, the people depending on the President the most, the middle class, working families, and the working poor will be left behind under this plan. In my district alone in Florida, over 66,400 people stand to lose healthcare coverage.

To my Republican colleagues, I ask: How long will we endure empty promises and made-up stories coming out of the White House? How long? I call on the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, delivered in 1965, when he marched from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, and he asked this question: ''How long? Not long, because no lie can live forever.''

How long? Mexico will pay for the wall. I will release my tax returns. Discriminatory travel bans. Hidden ties with our enemy Russia. How long? Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please hold President Trump accountable and do what you know in your hearts is right. Demand answers and allow the facts to lead you to justice. How long?

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT REPLACEMENT

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans released a bill last night. That bill deals with every American's welfare—every American's welfare—every child's welfare in this country. None of them were able to testify before the committee, before the committee marks it up on Wednesday. None of them were able to come to that committee and say how it will affect them or their families or their fellow citizens. None of them were able to testify as to the benefits of the Affordable Care Act for them, their families, their children, and their neighbors. None of them will have been able to read and digest the bill.

Mr. Speaker, last night, after locking it away in a basement for days, and just as reporters were leaving to go home, Republicans released the text of their legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The country has been waiting for 7 years for the Republican replacement, for the Republican alternative, for the Republicans to redeem their promise of a better plan, a better way to ensure the security of having health care that is affordable and available to each American and to their families and their children.

Republicans have been promising, since the enactment of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, that they would repeal it entirely and enact something better. They don't repeal it entirely, and they don't offer something better, something that covers more Americans and lowers costs to consumers. For 7 years, they have said we have a better plan. Last night, they revealed the inaccuracy of that representation; the bait-and-switch, if you will, of that representation; the pretense to their conservatives who have voted some 65 times to repeal the Affordable Care Act that they were not going to offer a bill that did that, notwithstanding the fact that they said that is what they are going to do.

The legislation they introduced would repeal, of course, some parts of the Affordable Care Act and replace them with policies that will take health coverage away, take health care away from millions of Americans and make millions of others pay more for less.

President Trump, just the other day from that rostrum, promised the American people that the Republican plan would ''have insurance for everybody.'' That was not true. Neither the House Republicans nor the Senate Republicans nor President Trump have offered such a plan, and the plan that was revealed last night does not fulfill that representation.

Mr. Speaker, it should not surprise us, however, that our President says things that prove to be not accurate. He also said from that rostrum that the policies would be far less expensive and far better than they are now. This bill does not do that, and the President has offered no bill that does that.

This plan fails that representation miserably. It increases healthcare costs for middle class families in order to pay for tax breaks for the wealthiest, who don't need them to afford health care. We should not penalize people for becoming wealthy. We applaud their success. But we should not subsidize health care for those of us who can afford our health care while those who cannot are left to fend for themselves. In other words, the Republicans are once again saying you are on your own.

Their bill also raids the Medicare trust fund, threatening its long-term solvency. In fact, the affordable care added to the life expectancy of Medicare. The bill that the Republicans have put forward imposes severe cuts to Medicaid as well. It forces States and healthcare providers to carry the burden of the uninsured while taking away funding for expanded Medicaid.

Their bill requires States to ration care by throwing those with preexisting conditions into ''sick pools,'' with higher premiums, higher deductibles, and waiting periods for coverage. And what services would be available under Medicaid?

Their plan replaces the individual responsibility requirement which, by the way, Mr. Speaker, as you may well know, was the proposal of The Heritage Foundation. The Heritage Action for America, which is the political arm of the foundation, opposes the Republican bill. Not for the same reason I do, but because they believe it continues much of what ACA tried to do in protecting Americans in a plan that was initially proposed by The Heritage Foundation and adopted by Governor Romney in Massachusetts.

Unbelievably, Mr. Speaker, Republicans won't even tell the American people how much this legislation will cost and what its impact will be on consumers' wallets and on our insurance markets. How do you do that? You have hearings, you listen to people, you listen to their experiences now, you listen to what their needs are, and you listen to those who have the greatest experience on their view of what the impact of this legislation will be. There have been no such hearings and none are planned.

Republicans know that millions of Americans will lose coverage under their legislation: those covered under Medicaid, the health insurance exchanges, and even those with employer-based insurance. That is why, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, they are rushing to see this bill put in force before it is illuminated by the light of day and before the American people find out how they will be impacted.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, it will be difficult for House Republicans to enact their bill into law, not only because of the extreme opposition to those proposals by the American people, as we have seen in townhall meeting after townhall meeting after townhall meeting across this country, but also because the House and Senate Republicans are already rejecting it. It is not certain that House Republicans can even reach a majority in this House on their legislation.

The head of the Republican Study Committee, the largest group of Republicans, has said this bill is not acceptable. The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS), the head of the Freedom Caucus, has said this bill does not repeal the Affordable Care Act, which is his objective and the objective of the Freedom Caucus. Senator CRUZ has said that as well. Senator PAUL has said that as well. Senator LEE has said that as well.

One thing is clear, however, Mr. Speaker, House Republicans are going to have to find the votes on their own to dismantle the protections incorporated in the Affordable Care Act that the American people now have.

Is the Affordable Care Act perfect? It is not. Should we have spent the last 6

years trying to make it work as well as it possibly can? Yes, we should have. Were we able to do that? No. The only alternative the Republican Party offered to the American people and to this House was to repeal. Not to replace, not to repair, not to fix, not to make sure it was more affordable and more available to the American people so that we would be a healthier and stronger nation. Their only option was to repeal.

□ 1245

Mr. Speaker, I urge Republican leaders to withdraw this bill. Let us work together to ensure what almost every Member says they want, and that is a healthcare program in America that is affordable by all, available to all, and enjoyed by all. That is what President Trump said at that rostrum just days ago.

This bill that the Republicans are going to mark up on Wednesday does not do what they say or what President Trump said. The American people will oppose it, and we will reflect their opposition in this House. But we are available to our Republican colleagues in good faith to work together to ensure that what the President said—available to all, at a lower price, with everybody having access—we will support that bill, if it exists, and we will work with our Republican colleagues to pass it and give that protection and security to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I note that there have not been many Republicans to speak this morning. I understand that one Republican spoke about this bill. I am amazed if they think this is a better way. I am amazed if they think this will do a better job than the Affordable Care Act. I am amazed if they think they are going to bring costs down and care up, and that we don't have a lot of Republicans, Mr. Speaker, coming to this floor and claiming victory. They are not here because they can't claim that victory.

Let's reject this bill, Mr. Speaker. Let's work together. We can do better. The American people expect us to do better.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 48 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FOXX) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Reverend Gary Studniewski, St. Peter's Catholic Church, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

O God, You, who have looked upon this grand American experiment with such favor from its beginning and who have preserved it by Your providence, graciously hear our prayers for our Nation, that it may be a bastion of liberty, of justice, of true freedom.

Bless this governing assembly with the spirit of Your wisdom, that its Members may decide everything for the well-being and peace of all. May these servants never turn aside from just and noble purposes, as You give them the light to discern these purposes.

Dear Lord, grant each House Member, their families, and their staffs strength, comfort, and always the peace of the kingdom where You reign today and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. SOTO led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

HONORING MADILYN GAWRYCH-TURNER

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

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a bright young constituent from my district in southern Illinois on winning a scholarship in the VFW Patriot's Pen essay competition.

Enacted in 1995, the Patriot's Pen program is designed to foster patriotism by allowing students the opportunity to express their opinion on patriotic themes. This year's theme was ''The America I Believe In.''

Madilyn Gawrych-Turner of Jonesboro Elementary School in Jonesboro, Illinois, was sponsored by the VFW post in Anna, Illinois. I would like to congratulate Madilyn, and I know she will have a very bright future.

Also, Madam Speaker, I would like to take just a second, if I may, to wish my wife a happy anniversary for the 37 years that we have been together.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT REPEAL

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

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, last night our Republican colleagues finally revealed their secret healthcare bill, and it is clear that TrumpCare doesn't care. Here are the top five reasons why:

Number one, TrumpCare cuts Medicaid. It creates block grants to States that will lead to less care, including forcing seniors out of nursing homes and reducing health care for the poor.

Number two, TrumpCare eliminates healthcare subsidies. In its place, it creates substandard tax cuts that will ensure millions of Americans can no longer afford health insurance.

Number three, TrumpCare favors the rich. It provides a tax giveaway for the rich, while leaving the middle class with less access to care.

Number four, TrumpCare hurts our hospitals. It kicks people off of insurance, guaranteeing hospitals, employer plans, and taxpayers will ultimately foot the bill.

Number five, TrumpCare defunds Planned Parenthood. This will leave millions of women without health care.

In summary, TrumpCare doesn't care, and it won't work.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, Sunday afternoon, the University of South Carolina's women's basketball team clenched their third consecutive Southeastern Conference championship.

The Gamecocks beat Mississippi State 59–49 in the SEC's women's basketball tournament title game in Greenville, South Carolina.

Juniors Kaela Davis of Suwanee, Georgia, and A'ja Wilson of Irmo, South Carolina, an extraordinary constituent, led the team with an impressive 38 combined points. This all-star team will likely hold the number one seed in the NCAA tournament that will begin on March 17.

Head coach Dawn Staley joined the University of South Carolina in 2008, building a team based on teamwork and determination. In the eight seasons that Coach Staley has been with the program, the South Carolina Women's Basketball Team has also seen three SEC regular season championships, three Sweet 16 seasons, and the program's first number one national ranking, with an average home attendance of over 14,000 Gamecock fans.

As March marks Women's History Month, it is especially fitting to congratulate Coach Dawn Staley and the historic Gamecock women's basketball team.

Best wishes for continued success in the NCAA playoffs. Go Gamecocks.

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT REPEAL AND REPLACE

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

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, last night House Republicans released their plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act. House Republicans and the Trump administration say that they want a healthcare plan that cuts costs and covers more Americans; yet they introduced a plan that takes away from millions of Americans and puts the poorest Americans, our seniors, our people with preexisting conditions, and working class families at greater risk of getting sick.

According to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, approximately 220,000 Philadelphians would lose their health insurance if the Affordable Care Act is repealed without adequate replacement.

We cannot take this risk. The new plan is an insult to the millions of Americans who have fought hard to try to get ahead. Now is the time to resist.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PEEPING TOMCRATS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the census counts the population every 10 years, but the Census Bureau also sends out a mandatory, intrusive personal and more time-consuming, 28-page document called the American Community Survey.

The survey asks intrusive questions like how many toilets does a person have in their house; what time does a person leave and come home from work; does any person in the house have poor eyesight, difficulty dressing, or mental issues.

If this Orwellian survey is ignored, the government may come after the citizen. First, the telephone calls start: weekly, then daily. Then Uncle Sam sends his peeping tomcrats to lurk around homes, forcing citizens to comply. If a person still refuses to hand over private information to the intrusive eyes of the government, the government may assess fines up to $5,000.

My bill, H.R. 1305, makes the American Community Survey voluntary and also removes the associated criminal penalties. The ACS is a violation of privacy and a costly abuse of government power.

And that is just the way it is.

THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, in recent weeks, I held three townhall meetings and a roundtable discussion about health care in my district. Hundreds of constituents attended, and altogether I spent more than 10 hours listening to our folks.

The best ideas come from the people, Madam Speaker. I know you know that, and I feel it is my duty as a Representative to hear my constituents' input.

The American Health Care Act reflects what I have heard from patients, families, doctors, and many others over the past 8 years. Our bill will lower costs, increase choices, and give patients greater control of their health care. We are helping middle-income Americans gain access to affordable coverage. It also protects those with preexisting conditions and allows young adults to stay on their parents' insurance until age 26.

Most importantly, this legislation is moving through the Congress in an open and transparent manner. I invite the people of Florida's 12th Congressional District and everyone to read and share the American Health Care Act at readthebill.gop.

FORSYTH ACADEMY

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, March is National Reading Month, and students across the country often kick off this observance by celebrating the birthday of treasured children's author Dr. Suess. Last week I visited Forsyth Academy in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where I read ''There's a Wocket in My Pocket!'' to first grade students.

Forsyth Academy is a charter school serving students from kindergarten through eighth grade. The school was founded on the principles of academic excellence, moral focus, parental partnership, and student responsibility. Its leadership believes in setting high standards, making expectations clear, providing meaningful instruction, and watching children surpass expectations as a result.

It is always a pleasure to visit local schools and witness the great things happening in classrooms across the Fifth District. Every student in every school deserves an excellent education, but, unfortunately, we are falling far short of that goal. Thankfully, innovative charter schools like Forsyth Academy are providing thousands of families new hope and opportunity.

School choice is a powerful tool to help children succeed, and I am encouraged by the momentum that is building. I look forward to the work ahead and exploring additional opportunities to provide parents more choices for their children's education.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 7, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 7, 2017, at 9:29 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H.J. Res. 37.

Appointment:

Members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 5 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky) at 5 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

FALEOMAVAEGA ENI FA'AUA'A HUNKIN VA CLINIC

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1362) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1362

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

SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC, PAGO PAGO, AMERICAN SAMOA.

The Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the ''Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic''. Any reference

to such community-based outpatient clinic in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add extraneous materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1362, a bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic.

I have sponsored this bill in order to honor my predecessor and a true public servant, the Honorable Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin.

Born on August 15, 1943, in Vailoatai Village, American Samoa, Mr. Faleomavaega graduated from Brigham Young University in 1966 and subsequently joined the United States Army and served in Vietnam.

However, his career in the Army was just the beginning of his public service. Mr. Faleomavaega served as a staff member to A.U. Fuimaono, American Samoa's first Delegate at-large to Washington, D.C., from 1973 to 1975.

Having earned his law degree from the University of Houston, he next served as staff counsel to the Committee on the Interior and Insular Affairs.

In 1981, Mr. Faleomavaega returned to American Samoa to serve as our deputy attorney general until 1984, then as our lieutenant governor until 1989. During this period, Mr. Faleomavaega reentered military service in the U.S. Army Reserve from 1982 to 1989.

In 1989, Mr. Faleomavaega began his tenure as the congressional Delegate from American Samoa. He went on to win 13 consecutive terms, making him the longest serving Delegate to date from American Samoa.

While in Congress, he diligently served the interests of his constituents as a member of both the House Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Natural Resources.

Sadly, my friend Eni Faleomavaega passed away on February 22. He is survived by his wife, 5 children, and 10 grandchildren.

I would now like to say a few personal words about the man whom I came to call a true friend.

Given that I challenged him for his seat from 1994 until 2014, when I won my first term, Eni and I had a long and complicated relationship. Though we were often at odds politically, we always treated one another with the utmost respect and grace, allowing us to form a shared bond that I am very thankful for and will never forget.

Ours was a true friendship that demonstrated that, despite whatever political differences we may have, we can all come together for the good of those we serve. While we may have had disagreements on national issues, we were very much in sync when it came to Federal policy and funding for American Samoa.

As a veteran whose long-term health suffered due to his service in Vietnam, Eni dedicated his life to improving conditions for veterans in American Samoa and took great pride in securing funds to build the local VA clinic which has served our veterans well.

Therefore, I can think of no better way to memorialize his dedication to the people of American Samoa and his service to our country in uniform than having the local VA clinic in Pago Pago, which he worked so hard for, named in his honor.

I want to encourage my colleagues in the House and Senate to salute my predecessor by supporting this measure so that we may honor this good man for his lifelong service and dedication to the people of American Samoa and to veterans everywhere.

This legislation satisfies all of the committee's naming criteria and is supported by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post Number 3391.

Once again, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

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

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1362. This tribute to our fellow colleague, a fellow veteran, our friend Eni, who passed last month, is truly well deserved.

I would also like to thank the gentlewoman from American Samoa for bringing this bill to the floor. And just as importantly, in her time here, she has proven to be the staunchest advocate of this Nation's veterans, a true friend to veterans, and a colleague who carries on Eni's commitment to this unwaveringly.

Eni devoted his public life to service, it was clear, ensuring that the unique needs and interests of the people of American Samoa were met in every bill that came through this body. For any of us who worked alongside him during those 13 terms, his unfailing commitment to his people and his ever-present smile will never be forgotten.

In addition to his work here and the things you heard the gentlewoman say, Eni served in the United States Army from 1966 to 1969 and as an officer in the United States Army Reserve from 1982 to 1989. He served honorably in the Vietnam war and left the military with the rank of captain.

He and his wife were also active members of their church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As a Vietnam veteran and Army Reserve captain, congressional aide, lieutenant governor, and Member of Congress, there simply could be no better example of what it means to be a representative of his people and a citizen of this great Nation.

I fully support the naming of this outpatient clinic at Pago Pago in his honor and urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time until all Members have had an opportunity to speak on each side.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN), another true champion of our veterans and a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1362, a bill that honors the late former Delegate from American Samoa, Eni Faleomavaega, by naming the veterans community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic.

A Vietnam veteran himself, Eni worked tirelessly to secure this clinic for veterans in American Samoa. His efforts to ensure all veterans in his district enrolled in VA health care, to secure rent-free space for the clinic through an agreement with the United States Army Reserve, and his testimony to the VA's CARES Commission resulted in a recommendation that a clinic be established and eventually led to the approval of the clinic by the Veterans Administration.

Eni was relentless in his pursuit of this goal so his fellow veterans in American Samoa would no longer have to travel more than 2,000 miles to Honolulu to seek care at a VA facility. It is fitting that it now be named after him.

Eni was someone I looked to as a leader. He was the dean of the Territories Caucus when I first came to Congress in 2009. He had served here for some 20 years by that point; but his experience was even more longstanding, having worked on the staff of Representative Philip Burton, a champion of the territories and all of the people in America who are often overlooked and forgotten.

There were two things in particular I saw in Eni. First, he had absolutely no hesitation in representing the people of American Samoa and providing glimpses of the culture with the rest of us. He relished the opportunity to wear his lavalava, one of the traditional pieces of clothing. He took pride in his traditional tattooing. He never hesitated to

sing the songs of his people 8,000 miles away.

Though a Delegate in this House, Eni Faleomavaega never presented himself as anything less than a Member of Congress. In doing so, he never diminished the standing of his constituents and their right, like all Americans, to have their voice heard here in the people's House.

The second lesson I learned from our departed friend was that the responsibilities of a Member of Congress go beyond the parochial concerns of our district. Of course, we are here to be sure that the people and place we represent are treated fairly and that our special circumstances are taken well into account in the formulation of Federal law and policy; but beyond that local responsibility, we all have a larger responsibility to act and speak on behalf of our Nation as a whole.

Eni certainly demonstrated that larger role we must all accept by his advocacy for Native Americans and by taking leadership in the foreign affairs of our Nation, especially in Asia and the island nations of the South Pacific. A good Member of Congress takes care of their own people, just as Eni did. A great Member of Congress understands that their people can only thrive when the Nation as a whole is a place of justice and peace.

Those are the lessons I learned from knowing Eni Faleomavaega, and for what he taught me, I will forever be grateful.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join us in passing this important piece of legislation. When those veterans in American Samoa see Eni's name, it will strike them about what he has done and the work that he did here in Congress.

I would also like to give a heartfelt thanks again to the gentlewoman for bringing this bill forward and for honoring her friend the way she has.

I encourage Members to support this bill.

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

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers at this time. Once again, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

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

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1362 a bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic. This is a fitting way to honor the life and service of my good friend and colleague former Congressman Eni Faleomavaega of American Samoa. During his 26 years of service in the House of Representatives, Congressman Faleomavaega displayed unwavering commitment to addressing a wide range of issues affecting veterans in the Pacific. His focus on access to health care and veteran services in remote areas of the Pacific ensured that veterans had access to the critical resources and services they needed and deserved after serving their country. His efforts directly contributed to increasing the quality of life of veterans throughout the Pacific region. Naming the VA facility in Pago Pago in his honor is a tribute to his service and commitment to the veterans in the Pacific region.

Congressman Faleomavaega's compassion for veterans can be attributed to his own service as an Army officer during the Vietnam conflict. Serving in this capacity gave him first-hand knowledge of the sacrifices servicemen make to protect our way of life.

I deeply miss Eni's advice, friendship and compassion for veterans. His passing has created a void for all that have known him. On behalf of the people of Guam, I extend my condolences to his family and the people of American Samoa. Our lives are richer for knowing Eni. I also extend my appreciation to Congresswoman RADEWAGEN in putting forward this legislation. It is a very appropriate way to memorialize an important part of Eni's work on behalf of the people of American Samoa.

Un dangkulo na si Yu'os ma'ase (with deepest gratitude), Eni. You are deeply missed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1362.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

FRED D. THOMPSON FEDERAL BUILDING AND UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 375) to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the ''Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 375

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

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION.

The Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, shall be known and designated as the ''Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Federal building and United States courthouse referred to in section 1 shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

□ 1715

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 375.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 375 would designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located in Nashville, Tennessee, as the Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse.

I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for her leadership on this legislation.

Senator Thompson was respected for his work as a lawyer, an actor, and as a United States Senator. This legislation is a fitting tribute that I am honored to bring to the floor today.

Fred Thompson first made a name for himself as an assistant U.S. attorney from 1969 to 1972. That experience brought him to the national stage in his subsequent position as special counsel on a number of Senate committees, most notably as minority counsel with the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, better known as the Watergate Committee.

It was then-Counsel Thompson who helped frame Senator Howard Baker's now famous question, ''What did the President know, and when did he know it?'' in regards to the Watergate controversy. Thompson himself asked an even more important question related to the existence of taped conversations in the Oval Office—tapes that led to President Nixon's eventual resignation.

After returning to the private practice of law in Nashville, Thompson represented the chairperson of the State Parole Board who unearthed a cash-for-clemency scheme involving the then-Governor of Tennessee. This case was eventually made into a book and into the film ''Marie.'' Fred Thompson was cast to play himself, which launched his acting career. Throughout the 1990s, Fred Thompson appeared in supporting roles in some of the decade's biggest movies, including ''Days of Thunder,'' ''The Hunt for Red October,'' and ''Die Hard 2.''

In 1994, Fred Thompson ran for political office for the first time and was elected to fill the remaining 2 years of Vice President Al Gore's Senate term. He was re-elected in 1996 to a full 6-year term and served as chairman of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs until his retirement in 2002.

That didn't slow Senator Thompson down. He returned to acting and won the role of New York District Attorney Arthur Branch on the hit NBC show ''Law & Order'' between 2002 and 2007. It was in 2007 that Senator Thompson returned to politics by announcing his candidacy for the United States Presidency. Although his return to the political realm was unsuccessful, Senator Thompson's popularity did not wane. He returned to acting on screen and on TV, wrote a memoir, and appeared often to comment on politics. Tragically, in 2015, Senator Thompson died from a recurrence of lymphoma.

Senator Thompson was a man of many talents. Through it all, he never lost his roots as a Tennessean. Given Senator Thompson's dedication to the law and public service, I believe it is more than fitting to name this courthouse and Federal building in Nashville after him.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of this legislation, H.R. 375, which names the Federal building and U.S. courthouse in Nashville, Tennessee, after the late Senator Fred Thompson.

Senator Thompson had a long and extraordinary career in many roles that included actor, lobbyist, private attorney, and radio show host. But he is best known and respected not for his hawking of reverse mortgages but for being an assistant U.S. attorney, a congressional staffer, and, lastly, a U.S. Senator representing the State of Tennessee. Senator Thompson was a graduate of Memphis State University and Vanderbilt Law School. Senator Thompson got his start in public life in 1967, when he served as an assistant U.S. attorney in Nashville, Tennessee.

During his time in that office, he met U.S. Senator Howard Baker from Tennessee who became a lifelong mentor to Senator Thompson. After managing Senator Baker's successful U.S. Senate campaign in 1972, Senator Thompson moved to Washington, D.C., where he was appointed counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee investigating the Watergate break-in and famously helped shape the direction and tone of those hearings.

I think that he will be known as one who helped Senator Baker in formulating that age-old, timeless question: ''What did President Nixon know, and when did he know it?'' It is ironic that today, Mr. Speaker, people are asking about our current President, President Trump: What did he know, and when did he know it?

I will tell you, President Trump stood right there at the rostrum of the House last week and said that the Republican health insurance plan would have insurance for everybody, the insurance would be far less expensive and far better than what we have today. But we see now that that was incorrect, as the Republicans have, on a Monday, I guess at some point before the day ended, introduced their repeal bill of the Affordable Care Act.

We are here talking about Senator Thompson today, but I just can't help asking: When did President Trump know that the Republican plan was going to throw 20 million people off of the Affordable Care Act depriving them of insurance? When did he know that? What did he know about this plan? Because not a whole lot of people around here knew of the plan until it was released because it was shrouded in secrecy, and it was released and a hearing scheduled to mark it up, to mark up the legislation with no hearings taking place on the underlying legislation.

So no CBO score, no congressional hearings about it, introducing it in a cloud shrouded in secrecy, and, boom, it is dropped on the American people at a time when you are trying to distract attention from other questions about what President Trump knew about Russia, Russian hacking, and those kinds of questions. What did he know about the GSA hotel that the taxpayers own that he is leasing and now he is the lessor and the lessee of that hotel that belongs to the American people? What did he know and when did he know it? Those are questions that the American people have. We intend to get down to the bottom of it on this side. I hope that we will have some help on the other side.

I do want to say that I support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I think the American people would be horrified to learn that of the 30 million people who were able to attain health insurance coverage and access to the healthcare system as a result of passage of the Affordable Care Act, many of those, a substantial number of those, will be thrown off of the rolls and deprived of the ability to have access to the healthcare system because of this new replacement bill that has been filed, which, as I said before, has not been scored.

We don't know how much the Medicare solvency issue is going to cost. We don't know how much it is going to cost. We don't know how much it is going to cost the taxpayers. We don't know how many people will lose their jobs because, after all, it stands to reason if you are serving 30 million more people, that means you have brought a whole lot of people into the healthcare delivery business, people who are working, people who have jobs, people who have husbands, wives, parents, and children who are depending on them for support, and you are going to tell them that their jobs are at risk.

Yes, they are, with this new law that has been half-baked introduced and fast-tracked to become law without people really knowing about it. This is something that people need to know about, people need to get out and exclaim their opposition to because it is going to hurt a lot of people.

The way that this bill changes the Affordable Care Act is it makes it unaffordable for most Americans to be able to afford the insurance that they have gained as a result of passage of the Affordable Care Act. The premium subsidies are recalculated. Instead of based on a sliding scale which is an indication of need, this Republican plan is going to replace that and calculate the amount of the premium subsidy based on age.

Now, what does that do, especially when you consider that some elderly people are more well-heeled than others? They can afford insurance, and they can afford to front the policy cost in return for the tax subsidy that they get. But what does that do to the younger people? So it is good news for some older people who are well-heeled. They will be helped by this Republican plan. But the average wage earner is going to be hurt—the younger people—because it is going to be more expensive for them.

But then I have some bad news for the elderly people, also. Insurance companies under this new plan will be able to charge the elderly five times more than they will charge a younger person. That differential had been abolished in the Affordable Care Act, but the Republicans are bringing it back. Who is going to pay? It is going to be those same elderly people. You put it in one hand, and you take it out of the other. All of the elderly people in America, regardless of how much money you earn, should be concerned about that.

Prioritizing health savings accounts over these premium subsidies is going to provide a great big tax cut to the wealthy. You can't get away from that. It is going to hurt the working people of this country. It is going to be a tax giveaway to the wealthy. I am sad to hear and to see this plan, and all of you should be, also.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT).

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I stand today in strong opposition to the Republican proposal to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

This is a rushed bill, Mr. Speaker, that was written behind closed doors in total secrecy with no daylight and with no access to the important content of this bill that all of us should have ample time to be able to digest the details of it and be able to make a good decision that is consistent with the will of our constituents. This is a

rushed bill that was written behind closed doors, again, in total secrecy.

Mr. Speaker, procedurally, we have not seen a CBO score of this bill. There have been no hearings on this bill. There has been no expert testimony on the impact of this bill, and the effect to healthcare costs for families or the quality of coverage all of those families will receive is completely unknown.

Substantively, this bill is an absolute nightmare. It guts Federal requirements for essential health benefits like maternity care. It shatters working Americans' access to insurance covering abortions. It creates age-based subsidies, repeals all the ACA taxes, and completely destroys the Medicaid expansion program which so much helped many of our States.

□ 1730

In our country, at least 11 million people will lose their healthcare insurance coverage as a result of this reckless dismantlement of Medicaid. In my district alone, over 156,000 individuals are going to lose their coverage with the repeal of the Medicaid expansion. Over 156,000 people, Mr. Speaker, will lose their coverage.

This bill kicks the elderly, the poor, and the sick to the curb and benefits only the young, healthy, and incredibly wealthy.

I urge my colleagues to stand with me in opposition. This bill is a serious heart attack to the American people. It is a blatantly partisan action to dismantle President Obama's successful signature project: ObamaCare. Again, the 1 percent get their way.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, decades to come, we will be able to go back and think of health care within the context of three major programs: Medicaid, Medicare, and ObamaCare.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE), my friend.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, with exactly zero hearings on the topic, our Republican friends have now revealed their TrumpCare plan.

Just to remind everyone what President Trump said during the campaign and promised, he said that his Republican plan would ''have insurance for everybody,'' and that it would be ''far less expensive and far better'' than what we have today.

Well, now we actually have the plan out. What does it do?

It kicks 20 million Americans off their health insurance. It sharply increases out-of-pocket costs for millions of American families. It rations care for millions of Americans on Medicaid. It includes massive cuts to Medicaid. It would make maternity care much more expensive.

But don't worry, there is good news. If you are a CEO of a healthcare company and you make, on average, as they do, somewhere between $13 million and $14 million, the tax increases that were leveled on you 6 years ago will now be repealed. So, congratulations. Those folks benefit, but 20 million Americans lose their health insurance.

Please join me in saying ''no'' to TrumpCare.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just can't get out of my mind, Mr. Speaker, those words of President Trump that everybody would have insurance and that it would be far less expensive and far better than what we have today.

The Republicans have campaigned incessantly for the last 7 years on repeal and replace of the Affordable Care Act, which they derisively referred to as ObamaCare. We are going to repeal it and we are going to replace it on day one is what they all said.

And here we are at day 45, something like that, and we have had nothing but one scandal after another; but we have finally now gotten to the House Republicans revealing what they have shrouded in secrecy for so long over the last 7 years. It sputters out without much ado, trying to sneak it in, trying to keep it undercover so that the American people won't realize what is being done to them.

I can tell you that what is being done under those covers is not worthy of my comment descriptively at this time, but I will say that it is an illicit, illegitimate situation that is taking place because you are taking from a group of people who are in need and you are giving more to individuals who have and who don't need.

In this country we are all in the same boat together. That is what the Affordable Care Act did. It was an aspiration for health care for everyone. It wasn't perfect. It is not a perfect bill. It needs some repairs done, if you will, some enhancements. We have never had the cooperation from the other side of the aisle to do anything to enhance that foundation that was already laid.

Nobody can argue with the fact that 30 million people who did not have health care access and now having it is a bad thing. Nobody can argue that. They could argue that: Well, the way that it was done was bad. They say that we rushed it through without any input from them, but there were literally dozens of public hearings and markups. The bill, all 1,000 pages, was available for everyone to be able to read.

They talk about reading the bill. Well, there are so many bills coming through right now that they don't want people to take the time to read them. That is why they introduce them late in the day and then they schedule markups for them without even putting them in front of the committee for a hearing. No airing out of the bill and what it does.

Why are they holding this and hiding it from the American people?

It is because they are trying to get away with something that is going to be bad for the people. That is why.

They knew that their changes, their repeal and replacement bill, if properly vetted, if the American people had an opportunity to learn what is in it, they knew it would not be popular. That is why they hid it from the public. That is why they are not having any hearings on it. They just want to proceed straight to a markup; pass it out of the committee; put it on the floor of the House; pass it out of the House with little debate; send it over to the Senate for a rubber stamp, they hope; and then on to President Trump, who, as I said, when did he know that this bill that he was going to be presented with perhaps did not provide coverage for everybody and was not far better in coverage than the Affordable Care Act? When was it that he learned that?

The American people want to know a whole lot. There is a whole lot to investigate about President Trump and his campaign. There is a whole lot to investigate about this repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act with an inferior product, one that is slanted to the rich and hurts the working people of this country.

Then it guts the Medicaid program, which millions and millions of people depend on to keep grandma and granddaddy and momma and daddy at the nursing home. Medicaid helps to make nursing home care affordable.

But under this healthcare repeal legislation that the Republicans have filed, they are going to cut Medicaid. They are going to use the expansion of the Medicaid program which enabled 10 million people to gain coverage that they could not afford, and they are going to cut that. At the same time, they are going to cut the other part of the Medicaid program which provides for people to be able to have their loved ones properly cared for at the nursing home, instead of down in the basement or upstairs in the spare bedroom.

So, get ready, ladies and gentlemen, for that inevitability if this legislation passes. Get ready for your loved ones to have no place to go, no nursing home facility to take care of them, because they will not be able to afford it and you will not be able to afford it.

Who will suffer most?

Momma and daddy and granddaddy and grandma. They are the ones that get the care that is so needed for the elderly.

So in this bill, where they are going to cut 20 million people off the healthcare rolls, they are going to cut momma and daddy from the nursing home by cutting the Medicaid program and turning it into a block grant program and turning it over to the States.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 375.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

FAIRNESS FOR BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS ACT OF 2017

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1174) to provide a lactation room in public buildings, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1174

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 ''Fairness For Breastfeeding Mothers Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. LACTATION ROOM IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

(a) LACTATION ROOM IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS.—Chapter 33 of title 40, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 3318. Lactation room in public buildings

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) APPROPRIATE AUTHORITY.—The term 'appropriate authority' means the head of a Federal agency, the Architect of the Capitol, or other official authority responsible for the operation of a public building.

''(2) COVERED PUBLIC BUILDING.—The term 'covered public building' means a public building (as defined in section 3301) that is open to the public and contains a public restroom, and includes a building listed in section 6301 or 5101.

''(3) LACTATION ROOM.—The term 'lactation room' means a hygienic place, other than a bathroom, that—

''(A) is shielded from view;

''(B) is free from intrusion; and

''(C) contains a chair, a working surface, and, if the public building is otherwise supplied with electricity, an electrical outlet.

''(b) LACTATION ROOM REQUIRED.—Except as provided in subsection (c), the appropriate authority of a covered public building shall ensure that the building contains a lactation room that is made available for use by members of the public to express breast milk.

''(c) EXCEPTIONS.—A covered public building may be excluded from the requirement in subsection (b) at the discretion of the appropriate authority if—

''(1) the public building—

''(A) does not contain a lactation room for employees who work in the building; and

''(B) does not have a room that could be repurposed as a lactation room or a space that could be made private using portable materials, at a reasonable cost; or

''(2) new construction would be required to create a lactation room in the public building and the cost of such construction is unfeasible.

''(d) NO UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize an individual to enter a public building or portion thereof that the individual is not otherwise authorized to enter.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 33 of title 40, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item related to section 3316 the following new item:

''3318. Lactation room in public buildings.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1174, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleagues for their work on bringing this bill to the floor today.

H.R. 1174 is a straightforward bill that would make nursing rooms available to new mothers in public buildings. The bill would apply to buildings already open to the public and which already have nursing rooms for employees. The requirements would not apply if existing space cannot feasibly be repurposed.

This is a good bill that will make the lives of nursing mothers easier and will improve the accessibility of public buildings.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1174, the Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act of 2017, introduced by my good friend, ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Georgia for yielding. I certainly thank him for being a cosponsor of my bill.

I should start, however, by thanking Chairman SHUSTER, and Ranking Member DEFAZIO, who have moved this bill so quickly.

The bill is called the Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act of 2017. This is a real motherhood bill. Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. JOHNSON, and BARBARA COMSTOCK have all joined me as cosponsors.

H.R. 1174 requires locations that are either federally owned or leased to provide designated private and hygenic lactation space for nursing mothers. As I will indicate, no new space in buildings or expenditures is contemplated.

Last Congress, I offered this bill as an amendment to the Public Buildings Reform and Savings Act of 2016, and I was pleased to have it pass the House.

Space for lactating women is already required for Federal employees. We are really not talking about a new kind of benefit. Certainly, there is no new money. The reason that this is not new is because Federal employees already have lactating space under the Affordable Care Act.

So I have to ask my good friends on the other side: As you try to repeal the Affordable Care Act, do you propose to erase this motherhood provision as well? Will you preserve it?

□ 1745

My bill extends the lactating space requirement to include not just employees, but visitors and guests of Federal facilities across the Nation. H.R. 1174 also does not require additional Federal funds or space to be mandated at all. Since Federal employees already have this space, I look forward to visitors to Federal buildings also making use of this space. In our country, new mothers often come to visit Federal buildings, not only those who work in Federal buildings.

The reason this is such an important bill is that the benefits of breast milk are so well documented: antibodies and hormones that boost babies' immune systems, lower risks of asthma, diabetes, respiratory infections, and other diseases among breastfed babies.

There are benefits also for nursing mothers. Research has shown that there are lower risks of diabetes and even cancer as a result of breastfeeding. Speaking of motherhood, the Republican healthcare plan would even make maternity care significantly more expensive.

Now, this, of course, is a bill that is very easy to support, but when we think of its links to other important legislation, I ask that there be sincere consideration given to whether or not at this moment in time my good friends across the aisle want their legacy to be: We actually repealed your health care.

I don't think they are going to be able to do it.

My Republican friends have no experience with structural reform. If you look at all the structural reform in our country, beginning with the New Deal, none of it was done by Republicans. Whether you are talking about the administrative agencies that are so important to all that we do in this country, Medicare, Medicaid, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, whatever you have in mind, these are structural reforms that Republicans

have, if anything, opposed, as they opposed Social Security, for example.

So here what they are trying to do is to unravel, take away health care, and then put something in its place. They have no experience doing anything like it. Anybody who has looked closely at it has to doubt, as I do, that they can do it.

Look what they will be doing. In my own district, the District of Columbia, we have cut in half the rate of uninsured.

Are Republicans going to give me a guarantee that that cut will remain if they replace the bill with the markup that is going on as we speak?

Ninety-six percent of District of Columbia residents have health coverage today. That is comparable to other advanced countries in the world. As we know, most countries in the world already afford this kind of coverage. That makes the District, according to whoever is doing the counting, number one, number two, or number three in the Nation in health care provided to our residents. I am very proud of that. I am going to fight like mad to keep it.

Mr. Speaker, many of us had healthcare townhalls over the recess. We saw what happened at the townhalls on affordable care that my good friends on the other side also had. They met a revolution from their own constituents. We didn't have that problem in our townhalls. Some of the stories that residents brought forward are truly heartbreaking, so I want to leave you with one.

A woman who came to testify at my healthcare townhall, her name is Markita. Markita's grandmother was a D.C. Public Schools cafeteria worker for most of her career. She retired early. She retired before she had Social Security or Medicare. She was suffering from diabetes and a stroke, but she was so prideful that she never let anyone know that she had to slice her pills in half just to get by. Now she is under the protection of the Affordable Care Act. Markita's grandmother is healthier and can afford her medication. She is no longer splitting her pills in half.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK).

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 1174, the Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act. I thank my colleague for introducing it. It was unanimously supported—thank you, Mr. Chairman—in committee and in full committee. As expected, it is going through because people understand this is a commonsense bill, so I am happy to support this once again.

I know you were discussing H.R. 375 earlier. I did want to return to the bill to designate the Federal building and courthouse in Nashville, Tennessee, to my good friend, Fred D. Thompson. That building will now be named after him appropriately.

Fred Thompson was a larger-than-life character, a true patriot, and a great wit who believed in and lived the American Dream in starring roles on stage, screen, and national politics. He served as a Senator for 8 years, and then later he ran for President. Originally he was here in Congress serving as a counsel where, of course, we had that famous line: ''What did the President know, and when did he know it?'' That was a line that he was well known for.

What he was also often not given credit for was what a profoundly good lawyer he was. He had come to the attention of people in Tennessee by LAMAR ALEXANDER when Howard Baker came and asked now-Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER to take a role in the Watergate hearings, he said: No; you want to have Fred Thompson there. He asked his friend Fred Thompson to come and serve in that role.

Fred then became an actor because when they went to write a movie about a woman who had been dealing with corruption in Tennessee politics, and Fred had been her lawyer, they couldn't find someone to play Fred, and they came and asked him: Could you play yourself? He said: Well, I guess I could. That is how he became a character actor and a larger-than-life character there. Some of his famous lines there: ''Stack 'em, pack 'em, and rack 'em.'' In ''Die Hard'' I believe that one was.

In movies, he starred with Paul Newman, Tom Cruise, Clint Eastwood, Gene Hackman, Robert Duvall, Bruce Willis, Sissy Spacek, and so many others. After he came here to the Senate, he humorously said: ''I often long for the realism and sincerity of Hollywood.'' So this is somebody who took his job very seriously but never took himself seriously and continued to have that great wit.

My husband and I were very privileged to know him and learn from him and spend many a good day and delightful time and evening with him and his wife, Jeri, his family, his children, and his many friends and admirers. We are so grateful for and appreciate his celebrated service and justly celebrated service to our country. This building will be a great memorial in a State that still very much reveres him.

I was privileged to be able to attend his service where hundreds and hundreds of people from Tennessee came to honor him, from country singers to people who stood by the side of the road as we drove to his funeral service, saluting him and thanking him for his service. This is somebody who in today's politics is sorely missed by all of us, and certainly most by his many friends, his family, and his scores of fans. God bless the Honorable Fred Thompson.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to be able to have this building now be a legacy to his great service and being a great attorney and lawyer for this country.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

What happened 43, 44 years ago during the Watergate hearings with that seminal question that everyone keeps asking, ''What did the President know, and when did he know it?'' and in the words of Yogi Berra: ''It's deja vu all over again.''

People are asking that question today, and it rings more loudly today than it did back then in 1973, 1974, ''What did the President know, and when did he know it?'' about a lot of issues.

But this issue of the Affordable Care Act and whether or not you are going to repeal it and replace it with something better or you are going to repeal and replace it with something worse, what did the President know, and when did he know it?

Because it is clear now to everybody who has had the opportunity to look at this offering that the Republicans have put forward, you are going to be worse off today than you were when the Affordable Care Act was implemented because 20 million of the 30 million people who are on coverage now will be off coverage if this thing passes.

This Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act of 2017, which was introduced by my colleague and friend, Congresswoman NORTON, which I am so pleased to be a cosponsor of, is a bill from a mother herself who knows the needs of other mothers. This is bipartisan. I am so happy that this bill is passing today, but I will tell you, I can't help but think of the 20 million people who are going to lose their coverage. A lot of those people are women and children, even some babies. They are going to lose coverage because the Republicans are kicking them off under their plan. They will be a healthy part of that 20 million people who lose their coverage. It is unfair. It is not right. It is un-American.

Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining on my side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia has 8½ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD).

Mr. SANFORD. I thank the chairman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise with the greatest respect for my colleague from the District of Columbia and her passion on this subject and the bill that she has introduced. I rise with equal respect for my colleague, Chairman BARLETTA, and the way in which he has walked this bill through the process, but I am going to oppose this bill. I am going to do so on the basis of process. I thought it important to explain why, given, I think, the amount of energy that has gone into the bill and the fact that I wasn't able to voice a vote against it when it was voice voted at the committee level.

I do so because I think that blank checks rarely work out well for the

taxpayer. In fairness to the bill, it is not a blank check. The bill is actually prescribed in three different ways—the way in which it will impact Federal buildings. My problem, though, is on methodology in that the General Services Administration that ultimately gave the numbers to the CBO on which they base their score did not get in final form how many Federal buildings we are talking about. I think that leaves, therefore, something of an open end as to what this bill will ultimately cost; and that then goes to impact the very children for whom the breastfeeding will take place.

□ 1800

A child born in America today is going to inherit a giant liability from the Federal Government in terms of the cost of our Federal Government. By accountants from both the left and the right, they have said what we have in place is not sustainable. Therefore, I think it is very important, from a process standpoint, that we look at a final form number on any of these bills that we throw out and we prescribe, regardless of, again, how well-meaning they are and how measured they are, which is certainly the case with this bill.

I wanted to stand to give a quick explanation. I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD), my friend, opposes the bill because the CBO scoring process, which came up with a no-cost estimate for this bill, the contention is that that CBO study was insufficient. Well, I am sure that my colleague and friend from South Carolina will agree with me that with no CBO scoring for this congressional Republican healthcare repeal bill that they have put forward, then we are certainly not in a position to proceed further with a fast-track legislating process, as this bill seems to be on. They are going to mark it up with no hearings.

When we were dealing with the Affordable Care Act, we held 79 hearings over 2 years, heard from 181 witnesses from both sides of the aisle, and posted the bill online for 30 days. The CBO scoring actually showed that this bill was going to save money, as opposed to cost.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleague from South Carolina to be in opposition to his own party's healthcare repeal bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the kind gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), my friend.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his work on this.

Mr. Speaker, after weeks of empty promises that he had a secret plan to insure every American at lower costs with higher quality care, President Trump is now standing behind a House GOP repeal plan that was introduced last night that fails every single one of those promises. Based on estimates that we have seen so far, millions of Americans stand to lose coverage, out-of-pocket costs will skyrocket, and the quality of care will plummet.

But today, hours after that bill was introduced, Mr. Speaker, our President referenced a to-be-announced second and third phase of his healthcare rollout that Secretary Price referred to as ''a work in progress,'' once again injecting our healthcare system with crippling uncertainty that is hurting our patients, hospitals, behavioral health providers, and local economies.

If you are so proud of this bill, why has it been locked in dark rooms? Why not have an open debate? What are we so afraid of to have a debate on this floor?

That is why I urge my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, to support my resolution of inquiry tomorrow, to try to make sure that the details that have been discussed by this White House and by the Republicans behind closed doors are open for America to understand before we cram a healthcare overhaul down our throats.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I was looking at my congressional calendar, and I noticed that this year we are working in Washington, D.C., more than we have under the past 5 years of the rein of the Republicans. We have been the most do-nothingest Congresses on record for many years, and so this year we will be working. But I am baffled as to whether or not it is because the Republicans don't want to go home and face their constituents in a townhall meeting about the Affordable Care Act repeal bill that they have filed. We will be here in session now for another 4 weeks before the public has a chance to hear from their Representative when they return home for an extended time. But on the flip side, that gives everybody time to prepare for those upcoming townhall meetings which need to be held to explain what they are trying to do to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), my friend.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Last Thursday, I was wandering the Capitol searching for the Republican's secret repeal bill. We went from room to room, and it wasn't there. But now that I have seen it, I understand why they would want to hide it.

Even if we can all agree that we need to make health care more affordable and more accessible, this bill is not the solution. In fact, this bill will only make things worse.

The Republican repeal bill gives tax breaks to the rich. We are talking about over $600 billion overall, while taking away health coverage from millions of Americans. The Republican repeal bill will drastically increase the cost of health insurance for millions of Americans, with the biggest increase for seniors and for working families.

It would radically change the Medicaid program, slashing funding, and covering fewer people.

The Republican repeal bill will force Governors and State legislators to ration care. My Republican Governor weighed in now and said that it would be trouble for Illinois if Medicaid is cut back.

Who do they want to cut out? Children, the elderly, people with disabilities. Thousands of hardworking individuals in Illinois will lose access to health coverage. As I said, in fact, Republican Governor Bruce Rauner said that our State ''won't do very well'' if the Republican repeal bill becomes law.

The Republican repeal bill breaks the promise made by President Trump to cover more Americans at lower cost.

I oppose this bill. I am going to fight tooth and nail to protect our care. And, frankly, I think this bill, as my mother would say, is deader than a door nail.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to correct the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD), who opined that this bill was not scored correctly.

We are talking about space already designated for Federal employees. The intent of the bill, and I am the author of the bill, which could never have gotten through committee if it involved the expenditure of funds. Yes, sometimes these lactation rooms will be dedicated to lactation, but that doesn't mean they are exclusively designated to lactation.

And the whole notion that some Federal buildings don't have such space means they are in violation of the Affordable Care Act, which requires that they have such space, even if it is not space that is exclusively used for the few women who are lactating or nursing.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have one more point that I needed to make about this abolition, this abolishment of the Affordable Care Act plan that has been submitted. A foundation of their plan is the demise of the individual mandate that requires people to purchase insurance, so they are claiming that that is a matter of freedom.

Well, the fact is that when everyone is required to have insurance, it reduces the cost for everyone else. So it was a cost-saving measure that has worked with the rise in premiums being at the lowest level in decades. The affordable care has worked to cut the cost of health care.

But what they are doing when they abolish that individual mandate is they are also going to penalize people who decide to drop their coverage and pick

it up later. Or if you miss one payment because you missed work, missed a paycheck or something like that, you missed 1 month and have to reinstate, then you are going to pay a 30 percent penalty on your insurance. That is highway robbery.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1174, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION TRANSITION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 442) to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 442

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term ''Administration'' means the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ''Administrator'' means the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(3) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives.

(4) CIS-LUNAR SPACE.—The term ''cis-lunar space'' means the region of space from the Earth out to and including the region around the surface of the Moon.

(5) DEEP SPACE.—The term ''deep space'' means the region of space beyond low-Earth orbit, to include cis-lunar space.

(6) GOVERNMENT ASTRONAUT.—The term ''government astronaut'' has the meaning given the term in section 50902 of title 51, United States Code.

(7) ISS.—The term ''ISS'' means the International Space Station.

(8) ISS MANAGEMENT ENTITY.—The term ''ISS management entity'' means the organization with which the Administrator has a cooperative agreement under section 504(a) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18354(a)).

(9) NASA.—The term ''NASA'' means the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(10) ORION.—The term ''Orion'' means the multipurpose crew vehicle described under section 303 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18323).

(11) SPACE LAUNCH SYSTEM.—The term ''Space Launch System'' has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18302).

(12) UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ASTRONAUT.—The term ''United States government astronaut'' has the meaning given the term ''government astronaut'' in section 50902 of title 51, United States Code, except it does not include an individual who is an international partner astronaut.

TITLE I—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 101. FISCAL YEAR 2017.

There are authorized to be appropriated to NASA for fiscal year 2017, $19,508,000,000, as follows:

(1) For Exploration, $4,330,000,000.

(2) For Space Operations, $5,023,000,000.

(3) For Science, $5,500,000,000.

(4) For Aeronautics, $640,000,000.

(5) For Space Technology, $686,000,000.

(6) For Education, $115,000,000.

(7) For Safety, Security, and Mission Services, $2,788,600,000.

(8) For Construction and Environmental Compliance and Restoration, $388,000,000.

(9) For Inspector General, $37,400,000.

TITLE II—SUSTAINING NATIONAL SPACE COMMITMENTS

SEC. 201. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SUSTAINING NATIONAL SPACE COMMITMENTS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) honoring current national space commitments and building upon investments in space across successive Administrations demonstrates clear continuity of purpose by the United States, in collaboration with its international, academic, and industry partners, to extend humanity's reach into deep space, including cis-lunar space, the Moon, the surface and moons of Mars, and beyond;

(2) NASA leaders can best leverage investments in the United States space program by continuing to develop a balanced portfolio for space exploration and space science, including continued development of the Space Launch System, Orion, Commercial Crew Program, space and planetary science missions such as the James Webb Space Telescope, Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope, and Europa mission, and ongoing operations of the ISS and Commercial Resupply Services Program;

(3) a national, government-led space program that builds on current science and exploration programs, advances human knowledge and capabilities, and opens the frontier beyond Earth for ourselves, commercial enterprise, and science, and with our international partners, is of critical importance to our national destiny and to a future guided by United States values and freedoms;

(4) continuity of purpose and effective execution of core NASA programs are essential for efficient use of resources in pursuit of timely and tangible accomplishments;

(5) NASA could improve its efficiency and effectiveness by working with industry to streamline existing programs and requirements, procurement practices, institutional footprint, and bureaucracy while preserving effective program oversight, accountability, and safety;

(6) it is imperative that the United States maintain and enhance its leadership in space exploration and space science, and continue to expand freedom and economic opportunities in space for all Americans that are consistent with the Constitution of the United States; and

(7) NASA should be a multi-mission space agency, and should have a balanced and robust set of core missions in space science, space technology, aeronautics, human space flight and exploration, and education.

SEC. 202. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Returns on the Nation's investments in science, technology, and exploration accrue over decades-long timeframes, and a disruption of such investments could prevent returns from being fully realized.

(2) Past challenges to the continuity of such investments, particularly threats regarding the cancellation of authorized programs with bipartisan and bicameral support, have disrupted completion of major space systems thereby—

(A) impeding planning and pursuit of national objectives in space science and human space exploration;

(B) placing such investments in space science and space exploration at risk; and

(C) degrading the aerospace industrial base.

(3) The National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–155; 119 Stat. 2895), National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–422; 122 Stat. 4779), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18301 et seq.) reflect a broad, bipartisan agreement on the path forward for NASA's core missions in science, space technology, aeronautics, human space flight and exploration, and education, that serves as the foundation for the policy updates by this Act.

(4) Sufficient investment and maximum utilization of the ISS and ISS National Laboratory with our international and industry partners is—

(A) consistent with the goals and objectives of the United States space program; and

(B) imperative to continuing United States global leadership in human space exploration, science, research, technology development, and education opportunities that contribute to development of the next generation of American scientists, engineers, and leaders, and to creating the opportunity for economic development of low-Earth orbit.

(5) NASA has made measurable progress in the development and testing of the Space Launch System and Orion exploration systems with the near-term objectives of the initial integrated test flight and launch in 2018, a human mission in 2021, and continued missions with an annual cadence in cis-lunar space and eventually to the surface of Mars.

(6) The Commercial Crew Program has made measurable progress toward reestablishing the capability to launch United States government astronauts from United States soil into low-Earth orbit by the end of 2018.

(7) The Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel, in its 2015 Annual Report, urged continuity of purpose noting concerns over the potential for cost overruns and schedule slips that could accompany significant changes to core NASA programs.

TITLE III—MAXIMIZING UTILIZATION OF THE ISS AND LOW-EARTH ORBIT

SEC. 301. OPERATION OF THE ISS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) after 15 years of continuous human presence in low-Earth orbit, the ISS continues to overcome challenges and operate safely;

(2) the ISS is a unique testbed for future space exploration systems development, including long-duration space travel;

(3) the expansion of partnerships, scientific research, and commercial applications of the ISS is essential to ensuring the greatest return on investments made by the United States and its international space partners in the development, assembly, and operations of that unique facility;

(4) utilization of the ISS will sustain United States leadership and progress in human space exploration by—

(A) facilitating the commercialization and economic development of low-Earth orbit;

(B) serving as a testbed for technologies and a platform for scientific research and development; and

(C) serving as an orbital facility enabling research upon—

(i) the health, well-being, and performance of humans in space; and

(ii) the development of in-space systems enabling human space exploration beyond low-Earth orbit; and

(5) the ISS provides a platform for fundamental, microgravity, discovery-based space life and physical sciences research that is critical for enabling space exploration, protecting humans in space, increasing pathways for commercial space development that depend on advances in basic research, and contributes to advancing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics research.

(b) OBJECTIVES.—The primary objectives of the ISS program shall be—

(1) to achieve the long term goal and objectives under section 202 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18312); and

(2) to pursue a research program that advances knowledge and provides other benefits to the Nation.

(c) CONTINUATION OF THE ISS.—Section 501 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18351) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 501. CONTINUATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION.

''(a) POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES.—It shall be the policy of the United States, in consultation with its international partners in the ISS program, to support full and complete utilization of the ISS through at least 2024.

''(b) NASA ACTION.—In furtherance of the policy set forth in subsection (a), NASA shall—

''(1) pursue international, commercial, and intragovernmental means to maximize ISS logistics supply, maintenance, and operational capabilities, reduce risks to ISS systems sustainability, and offset and minimize United States operations costs relating to the ISS;

''(2) utilize, to the extent practicable, the ISS for the development of capabilities and technologies needed for the future of human space exploration beyond low-Earth orbit; and

''(3) utilize, if practical and cost effective, the ISS for Science Mission Directorate missions in low-Earth orbit.''.

SEC. 302. TRANSPORTATION TO ISS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that reliance on foreign carriers for United States crew transfer is unacceptable, and the Nation's human space flight program must acquire the capability to launch United States government astronauts on vehicles using United States rockets from United States soil as soon as is safe, reliable, and affordable to do so.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON COMMERCIAL CREW PROGRAM AND COMMERCIAL RESUPPLY SERVICES PROGRAM.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) once developed and certified to meet the Administration's safety and reliability requirements, United States commercially provided crew transportation systems can serve as the primary means of transporting United States government astronauts and international partner astronauts to and from the ISS and serving as ISS crew rescue vehicles;

(2) previous budgetary assumptions used by the Administration in its planning for the Commercial Crew Program assumed significantly higher funding levels than were authorized and appropriated by Congress;

(3) credibility in the Administration's budgetary estimates for the Commercial Crew Program can be enhanced by an independently developed cost estimate;

(4) such credibility in budgetary estimates is an important factor in understanding program risk;

(5) United States access to low-Earth orbit is paramount to the continued success of the ISS and ISS National Laboratory;

(6) a stable and successful Commercial Resupply Services Program and Commercial Crew Program are critical to ensuring timely provisioning of the ISS and to reestablishing the capability to launch United States government astronauts from United States soil into orbit, ending reliance upon Russian transport of United States government astronauts to the ISS which has not been possible since the retirement of the Space Shuttle program in 2011;

(7) NASA should build upon the success of the Commercial Orbital Transportation Services Program and Commercial Resupply Services Program that have allowed private sector companies to partner with NASA to

deliver cargo and scientific experiments to the ISS since 2012;

(8) the 21st Century Launch Complex Program has enabled significant modernization and infrastructure improvements at launch sites across the United States to support NASA's Commercial Resupply Services Program and other civil and commercial space flight missions; and

(9) the 21st Century Launch Complex Program should be continued in a manner that leverages State and private investments to achieve the goals of that program.

(c) REAFFIRMATION.—Congress reaffirms—

(1) its commitment to the use of a commercially developed, private sector launch and delivery system to the ISS for crew missions as expressed in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–155; 119 Stat. 2895), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–422; 122 Stat. 4779), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18301 et seq.); and

(2) the requirement under section 50111(b)(1)(A) of title 51, United States Code, that the Administration shall make use of United States commercially provided ISS crew transfer and crew rescue services to the maximum extent practicable.

(d) USE OF NON-UNITED STATES HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT TRANSPORTATION CAPABILITIES.—Section 201(a) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18311(a)) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) USE OF NON-UNITED STATES HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Federal Government may not acquire human space flight transportation services from a foreign entity unless—

''(A) no United States Government-operated human space flight capability is available;

''(B) no United States commercial provider is available; and

''(C) it is a qualified foreign entity.

''(2) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) COMMERCIAL PROVIDER.—The term 'commercial provider' means any person providing human space flight transportation services, primary control of which is held by persons other than the Federal Government, a State or local government, or a foreign government.

''(B) QUALIFIED FOREIGN ENTITY.—The term 'qualified foreign entity' means a foreign entity that is in compliance with all applicable safety standards and is not prohibited from providing space transportation services under other law.

''(C) UNITED STATES COMMERCIAL PROVIDER.—The term 'United States commercial provider' means a commercial provider, organized under the laws of the United States or of a State, that is more than 50 percent owned by United States nationals.

''(3) ARRANGEMENTS WITH FOREIGN ENTITIES.—Nothing in this subsection shall prevent the Administrator from negotiating or entering into human space flight transportation arrangements with foreign entities to ensure safety of flight and continued ISS operations.''.

(e) COMMERCIAL CREW PROGRAM.—

(1) OBJECTIVE.—The objective of the Commercial Crew Program shall be to assist in the development and certification of commercially provided transportation that—

(A) can carry United States government astronauts safely, reliably, and affordably to and from the ISS;

(B) can serve as a crew rescue vehicle; and

(C) can accomplish subparagraphs (A) and (B) as soon as practicable.

(2) PRIMARY CONSIDERATION.—The objective described in paragraph (1) shall be the primary consideration in the acquisition strategy for the Commercial Crew Program.

(3) SAFETY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall protect the safety of government astronauts by ensuring that each commercially provided transportation system under this subsection meets all applicable human rating requirements in accordance with section 403(b)(1) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18342(b)(1)).

(B) LESSONS LEARNED.—Consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board, the Administration shall ensure that safety and the minimization of the probability of loss of crew are the critical priorities of the Commercial Crew Program.

(4) COST MINIMIZATION.—The Administrator shall strive through the competitive selection process to minimize the life cycle cost to the Administration through the planned period of commercially provided crew transportation services.

(f) COMMERCIAL CARGO PROGRAM.—Section 401 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18341) is amended by striking ''Commercial Orbital Transportation Services'' and inserting ''Commercial Resupply Services''.

(g) COMPETITION.—It is the policy of the United States that, to foster the competitive development, operation, improvement, and commercial availability of space transportation services, and to minimize the life cycle cost to the Administration, the Administrator shall procure services for Federal Government access to and return from the ISS, whenever practicable, via fair and open competition for well-defined, milestone-based, Federal Acquisition Regulation-based contracts under section 201(a) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18311(a)).

(h) TRANSPARENCY.—

(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that cost transparency and schedule transparency aid in effective program management and risk assessment.

(2) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, to the greatest extent practicable and in a manner that does not add costs or schedule delays to the program, ensure all Commercial Crew Program and Commercial Resupply Services Program providers provide evidence-based support for their costs and schedules.

(i) ISS CARGO RESUPPLY SERVICES LESSONS LEARNED.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that—

(1) identifies the lessons learned to date from previous and existing Commercial Resupply Services contracts;

(2) indicates whether changes are needed to the manner in which the Administration procures and manages similar services prior to the issuance of future Commercial Resupply Services procurement opportunities; and

(3) identifies any lessons learned from the Commercial Resupply Services contracts that should be applied to the procurement and management of commercially provided crew transfer services to and from the ISS or to other future procurements.

SEC. 303. ISS TRANSITION PLAN.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) NASA has been both the primary supplier and consumer of human space flight capabilities and services of the ISS and in low-Earth orbit; and

(2) according to the National Research Council report ''Pathways to Exploration: Rationales and Approaches for a U.S. Program of Human Space Exploration'' extending ISS beyond 2020 to 2024 or 2028 will have significant negative impacts on the schedule of crewed missions to Mars, without significant increases in funding.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) an orderly transition for United States human space flight activities in low-Earth orbit from the current regime, that relies heavily on NASA sponsorship, to a regime where NASA is one of many customers of a low-Earth orbit commercial human space flight enterprise may be necessary; and

(2) decisions about the long-term future of the ISS impact the ability to conduct future deep space exploration activities, and that such decisions regarding the ISS should be considered in the context of the human exploration roadmap under section 432 of this Act.

(c) REPORTS.—Section 50111 of title 51, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) ISS TRANSITION PLAN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, in coordination with the ISS management entity (as defined in section 2 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017), ISS partners, the scientific user community, and the commercial space sector, shall develop a plan to transition in a step-wise approach from the current regime that relies heavily on NASA sponsorship to a regime where NASA could be one of many customers of a low-Earth orbit non-governmental human space flight enterprise.

''(2) REPORTS.—Not later than December 1, 2017, and biennially thereafter until 2023, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

''(A) a description of the progress in achieving the Administration's deep space human exploration objectives on ISS and prospects for accomplishing future mission requirements, space exploration objectives, and other research objectives on future commercially supplied low-Earth orbit platforms or migration of those objectives to cis-lunar space;

''(B) the steps NASA is taking and will take, including demonstrations that could be conducted on the ISS, to stimulate and facilitate commercial demand and supply of products and services in low-Earth orbit;

''(C) an identification of barriers preventing the commercialization of low-Earth orbit, including issues relating to policy, regulations, commercial intellectual property, data, and confidentiality, that could inhibit the use of the ISS as a commercial incubator;

''(D) the criteria for defining the ISS as a research success;

''(E) the criteria used to determine whether the ISS is meeting the objective under section 301(b)(2) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017;

''(F) an assessment of whether the criteria under subparagraphs (D) and (E) are consistent with the research areas defined in, and recommendations and schedules under, the current National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Decadal Survey on Biological and Physical Sciences in Space;

''(G) any necessary contributions that ISS extension would make to enabling execution of the human exploration roadmap under section 432 of the National Aeronautics and

Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017;

''(H) the cost estimates for operating the ISS to achieve the criteria required under subparagraphs (D) and (E) and the contributions identified under subparagraph (G);

''(I) the cost estimates for extending operations of the ISS to 2024, 2028, and 2030;

''(J) an evaluation of the feasible and preferred service life of the ISS beyond the period described in section 503 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18353), through at least 2028, as a unique scientific, commercial, and space exploration-related facility, including—

''(i) a general discussion of international partner capabilities and prospects for extending the partnership;

''(ii) the cost associated with extending the service life;

''(iii) an assessment on the technical limiting factors of the service life of the ISS, including a list of critical components and their expected service life and availability; and

''(iv) such other information as may be necessary to fully describe the justification for and feasibility of extending the service life of the ISS, including the potential scientific or technological benefits to the Federal Government, public, or to academic or commercial entities;

''(K) an identification of the necessary actions and an estimate of the costs to deorbit the ISS once it has reached the end of its service life;

''(L) the impact on deep space exploration capabilities, including a crewed mission to Mars in the 2030s, if the preferred service life of the ISS is extended beyond 2024 and NASA maintains a flat budget profile; and

''(M) an evaluation of the functions, roles, and responsibilities for management and operation of the ISS and a determination of—

''(i) those functions, roles, and responsibilities the Federal Government should retain during the lifecycle of the ISS;

''(ii) those functions, roles, and responsibilities that could be transferred to the commercial space sector;

''(iii) the metrics that would indicate the commercial space sector's readiness and ability to assume the functions, roles, and responsibilities described in clause (ii); and

''(iv) any necessary changes to any agreements or other documents and the law to enable the activities described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

''(3) DEMONSTRATIONS.—If additional Government crew, power, and transportation resources are available after meeting the Administration's requirements for ISS activities defined in the human exploration roadmap and related research, demonstrations identified under paragraph (2) may—

''(A) test the capabilities needed to meet future mission requirements, space exploration objectives, and other research objectives described in paragraph (2)(A); and

''(B) demonstrate or test capabilities, including commercial modules or deep space habitats, Environmental Control and Life Support Systems, orbital satellite assembly, exploration space suits, a node that enables a wide variety of activity, including multiple commercial modules and airlocks, additional docking or berthing ports for commercial crew and cargo, opportunities for the commercial space sector to cost share for transportation and other services on the ISS, other commercial activities, or services obtained through alternate acquisition approaches.''.

SEC. 304. SPACE COMMUNICATIONS.

(a) PLAN.—The Administrator shall develop a plan, in consultation with relevant Federal agencies, to meet the Administration's projected space communication and navigation needs for low-Earth orbit and deep space operations in the 20-year period following the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) CONTENTS.—The plan shall include—

(1) the lifecycle cost estimates and a 5-year funding profile;

(2) the performance capabilities required to meet the Administration's projected space communication and navigation needs;

(3) the measures the Administration will take to sustain the existing space communications and navigation architecture;

(4) an identification of the projected space communications and navigation network and infrastructure needs;

(5) a description of the necessary upgrades to meet the needs identified in paragraph (4), including—

(A) an estimate of the cost of the upgrades;

(B) a schedule for implementing the upgrades; and

(C) an assessment of whether and how any related missions will be impacted if resources are not secured at the level needed;

(6) the cost estimates for the maintenance of existing space communications network capabilities necessary to meet the needs identified in paragraph (4);

(7) the criteria for prioritizing resources for the upgrades described in paragraph (5) and the maintenance described in paragraph (6);

(8) an estimate of any reimbursement amounts the Administration may receive from other Federal agencies;

(9) an identification of the projected Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System needs in the 20-year period following the date of enactment of this Act, including in support of relevant Federal agencies, and cost and schedule estimates to maintain and upgrade the Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System to meet the projected needs;

(10) the measures the Administration is taking to meet space communications needs after all Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System third-generation communications satellites are operational; and

(11) the measures the Administration is taking to mitigate threats to electromagnetic spectrum use.

(c) SCHEDULE.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit the plan to the appropriate committees of Congress.

SEC. 305. INDEMNIFICATION; NASA LAUNCH SERVICES AND REENTRY SERVICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 201 of title 51, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 20148. Indemnification; NASA launch services and reentry services

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Under such regulations in conformity with this section as the Administrator shall prescribe taking into account the availability, cost, and terms of liability insurance, any contract between the Administration and a provider may provide that the United States will indemnify the provider against successful claims (including reasonable expenses of litigation or settlement) by third parties for death, bodily injury, or loss of or damage to property resulting from launch services and reentry services carried out under the contract that the contract defines as unusually hazardous or nuclear in nature, but only to the extent the total amount of successful claims related to the activities under the contract—

''(1) is more than the amount of insurance or demonstration of financial responsibility described in subsection (c)(3); and

''(2) is not more than the amount specified in section 50915(a)(1)(B).

''(b) TERMS OF INDEMNIFICATION.—A contract made under subsection (a) that provides indemnification shall provide for—

''(1) notice to the United States of any claim or suit against the provider for death, bodily injury, or loss of or damage to property; and

''(2) control of or assistance in the defense by the United States, at its election, of that claim or suit and approval of any settlement.

''(c) LIABILITY INSURANCE OF THE PROVIDER.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The provider under subsection (a) shall obtain liability insurance or demonstrate financial responsibility in amounts to compensate for the maximum probable loss from claims by—

''(A) a third party for death, bodily injury, or property damage or loss resulting from a launch service or reentry service carried out under the contract; and

''(B) the United States Government for damage or loss to Government property resulting from a launch service or reentry service carried out under the contract.

''(2) MAXIMUM PROBABLE LOSSES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall determine the maximum probable losses under subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) not later than 90 days after the date that the provider requests such a determination and submits all information the Administrator requires.

''(B) REVISIONS.—The Administrator may revise a determination under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph if the Administrator determines the revision is warranted based on new information.

''(3) AMOUNT OF INSURANCE.—For the total claims related to one launch or reentry, a provider shall not be required to obtain insurance or demonstrate financial responsibility of more than—

''(A)(i) $500,000,000 under paragraph (1)(A); or

''(ii) $100,000,000 under paragraph (1)(B); or

''(B) the maximum liability insurance available on the world market at reasonable cost.

''(4) COVERAGE.—An insurance policy or demonstration of financial responsibility under this subsection shall protect the following, to the extent of their potential liability for involvement in launch services or reentry services:

''(A) The Government.

''(B) Personnel of the Government.

''(C) Related entities of the Government.

''(D) Related entities of the provider.

''(E) Government astronauts.

''(d) NO INDEMNIFICATION WITHOUT CROSS-WAIVER.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), the Administrator may not indemnify a provider under this section unless there is a cross-waiver between the Administration and the provider as described in subsection (e).

''(e) CROSS-WAIVERS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, on behalf of the United States and its departments, agencies, and instrumentalities, shall reciprocally waive claims with a provider under which each party to the waiver agrees to be responsible, and agrees to ensure that its related entities are responsible, for damage or loss to its property, or for losses resulting from any injury or death sustained by its employees or agents, as a result of activities arising out of the performance of the contract.

''(2) LIMITATION.—The waiver made by the Government under paragraph (1) shall apply only to the extent that the claims are more than the amount of insurance or demonstration of financial responsibility required under subsection (c)(1)(B).

''(f) WILLFUL MISCONDUCT.—Indemnification under subsection (a) may exclude claims

resulting from the willful misconduct of the provider or its related entities.

''(g) CERTIFICATION OF JUST AND REASONABLE AMOUNT.—No payment may be made under subsection (a) unless the Administrator or the Administrator's designee certifies that the amount is just and reasonable.

''(h) PAYMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Upon the approval by the Administrator, payments under subsection (a) may be made from funds appropriated for such payments.

''(2) LIMITATION.—The Administrator shall not approve payments under paragraph (1), except to the extent provided in an appropriation law or to the extent additional legislative authority is enacted providing for such payments.

''(3) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS.—If the Administrator requests additional appropriations to make payments under this subsection, then the request for those appropriations shall be made in accordance with the procedures established under section 50915.

''(i) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The authority to indemnify under this section shall not create any rights in third persons that would not otherwise exist by law.

''(2) OTHER AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this section may be construed as prohibiting the Administrator from indemnifying a provider or any other NASA contractor under other law, including under Public Law 85–804 (50 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.).

''(3) ANTI-DEFICIENCY ACT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section—

''(A) all obligations under this section are subject to the availability of funds; and

''(B) nothing in this section may be construed to require obligation or payment of funds in violation of sections 1341, 1342, 1349 through 1351, and 1511 through 1519 of title 31, United States Code (commonly referred to as the 'Anti-Deficiency Act').

''(j) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.—The Administrator may not provide indemnification under this section for an activity that requires a license or permit under chapter 509.

''(k) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) GOVERNMENT ASTRONAUT.—The term 'government astronaut' has the meaning given the term in section 50902.

''(2) LAUNCH SERVICES.—The term 'launch services' has the meaning given the term in section 50902.

''(3) PROVIDER.—The term 'provider' means a person that provides domestic launch services or domestic reentry services to the Government.

''(4) REENTRY SERVICES.—The term 'reentry services' has the meaning given the term in section 50902.

''(5) RELATED ENTITY.—The term 'related entity' means a contractor or subcontractor.

''(6) THIRD PARTY.—The term 'third party' means a person except—

''(A) the United States Government;

''(B) related entities of the Government involved in launch services or reentry services;

''(C) a provider;

''(D) related entities of the provider involved in launch services or reentry services; or

''(E) a government astronaut.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for subchapter III of chapter 201 of title 51, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 20147 the following:

''20148. Indemnification; NASA launch services and reentry services.''.

TITLE IV—ADVANCING HUMAN DEEP SPACE EXPLORATION

Subtitle A—Human Space Flight and Exploration Goals and Objectives

SEC. 411. HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT AND EXPLORATION LONG-TERM GOALS.

Section 202(a) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18312(a)) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) LONG-TERM GOALS.—The long-term goals of the human space flight and exploration efforts of NASA shall be—

''(1) to expand permanent human presence beyond low-Earth orbit and to do so, where practical, in a manner involving international, academic, and industry partners;

''(2) crewed missions and progress toward achieving the goal in paragraph (1) to enable the potential for subsequent human exploration and the extension of human presence throughout the solar system; and

''(3) to enable a capability to extend human presence, including potential human habitation on another celestial body and a thriving space economy in the 21st Century.''.

SEC. 412. KEY OBJECTIVES.

Section 202(b) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18312(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) to achieve human exploration of Mars and beyond through the prioritization of those technologies and capabilities best suited for such a mission in accordance with the stepping stone approach to exploration under section 70504 of title 51, United States Code.''.

SEC. 413. VISION FOR SPACE EXPLORATION.

Section 20302 of title 51, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting ''in cislunar space or'' after ''sustained human presence'';

(2) by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

''(b) FUTURE EXPLORATION OF MARS.—The Administrator shall manage human space flight programs, including the Space Launch System and Orion, to enable humans to explore Mars and other destinations by defining a series of sustainable steps and conducting mission planning, research, and technology development on a timetable that is technically and fiscally possible, consistent with section 70504.''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) ORION.—The term 'Orion' means the multipurpose crew vehicle described under section 303 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18323).

''(2) SPACE LAUNCH SYSTEM.—The term 'Space Launch System' means has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18302).''.

SEC. 414. STEPPING STONE APPROACH TO EXPLORATION.

Section 70504 of title 51, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 70504. Stepping stone approach to exploration

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administration—

''(1) may conduct missions to intermediate destinations in sustainable steps in accordance with section 20302(b) of this title, and on a timetable determined by the availability of funding, in order to achieve the objective of human exploration of Mars specified in section 202(b)(5) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18312(b)(5)); and

''(2) shall incorporate any such missions into the human exploration roadmap under section 432 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017.

''(b) COST-EFFECTIVENESS.—In order to maximize the cost-effectiveness of the long-term space exploration and utilization activities of the United States, the Administrator shall take all necessary steps, including engaging international, academic, and industry partners, to ensure that activities in the Administration's human space exploration program balance how those activities might also help meet the requirements of future exploration and utilization activities leading to human habitation on the surface of Mars.

''(c) COMPLETION.—Within budgetary considerations, once an exploration-related project enters its development phase, the Administrator shall seek, to the maximum extent practicable, to complete that project without undue delays.

''(d) INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION.—In order to achieve the goal of successfully conducting a crewed mission to the surface of Mars, the President may invite the United States partners in the ISS program and other nations, as appropriate, to participate in an international initiative under the leadership of the United States.''.

SEC. 415. UPDATE OF EXPLORATION PLAN AND PROGRAMS.

Section 70502(2) of title 51, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(2) implement an exploration research and technology development program to enable human and robotic operations consistent with section 20302(b) of this title;''.

SEC. 416. REPEALS.

(a) SPACE SHUTTLE CAPABILITY ASSURANCE.—Section 203 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18313) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b);

(2) in subsection (d), by striking ''subsection (c)'' and inserting ''subsection (b)''; and

(3) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (b) and (c), respectively.

(b) SHUTTLE PRICING POLICY FOR COMMERCIAL AND FOREIGN USERS.—Chapter 703 of title 51, United States Code, and the item relating to that chapter in the table of chapters for that title, are repealed.

(c) SHUTTLE PRIVATIZATION.—Section 50133 of title 51, United States Code, and the item relating to that section in the table of sections for chapter 501 of that title, are repealed.

SEC. 417. ASSURED ACCESS TO SPACE.

Section 70501 of title 51, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

''(a) POLICY STATEMENT.—In order to ensure continuous United States participation and leadership in the exploration and utilization of space and as an essential instrument of national security, it is the policy of the United States to maintain an uninterrupted capability for human space flight and operations—

''(1) in low-Earth orbit; and

''(2) beyond low-Earth orbit once the capabilities described in section 421(f) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017 become available.''; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''Committee on Science and Technology of the

House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate describing the progress being made toward developing the Crew Exploration Vehicle and the Crew Launch Vehicle'' and inserting ''Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives describing the progress being made toward developing the Space Launch System and Orion''.

Subtitle B—Assuring Core Capabilities for Exploration

SEC. 421. SPACE LAUNCH SYSTEM, ORION, AND EXPLORATION GROUND SYSTEMS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) NASA has made steady progress in developing and testing the Space Launch System and Orion exploration systems with the successful Exploration Flight Test of Orion in December of 2014, the final qualification test firing of the 5-segment Space Launch System boosters in June 2016, and a full thrust, full duration test firing of the RS–25 Space Launch System core stage engine in August 2016.

(2) Through the 21st Century Launch Complex program and Exploration Ground Systems programs, NASA has made significant progress in transforming exploration ground systems infrastructure to meet NASA's mission requirements for the Space Launch System and Orion and to modernize NASA's launch complexes to the benefit of the civil, defense, and commercial space sectors.

(b) SPACE LAUNCH SYSTEM.—

(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that use of the Space Launch System and Orion, with contributions from partnerships with the private sector, academia, and the international community, is the most practical approach to reaching the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

(2) REAFFIRMATION.—Congress reaffirms the policy and minimum capability requirements for the Space Launch System under section 302 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18322).

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SPACE LAUNCH SYSTEM, ORION, AND EXPLORATION GROUND SYSTEMS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) as the United States works to send humans on a series of missions to Mars in the 2030s, the United States national space program should continue to make progress on its commitment by fully developing the Space Launch System, Orion, and related Exploration Ground Systems;

(2) using the Space Launch System and Orion for a wide range of contemplated missions will facilitate the national defense, science, and exploration objectives of the United States;

(3) the United States should have continuity of purpose for the Space Launch System and Orion in deep space exploration missions, using them beginning with the uncrewed mission, EM–1, planned for 2018, followed by the crewed mission, EM–2, in cis-lunar space planned for 2021, and for subsequent missions beginning with EM–3 extending into cis-lunar space and eventually to Mars;

(4) the President's annual budget requests for the Space Launch System and Orion development, test, and operational phases should strive to accurately reflect the resource requirements of each of those phases;

(5) the fully integrated Space Launch System, including an upper stage needed to go beyond low-Earth orbit, will safely enable human space exploration of the Moon, Mars, and beyond; and

(6) the Administrator should budget for and undertake a robust ground test and uncrewed and crewed flight test and demonstration program for the Space Launch System and Orion in order to promote safety and reduce programmatic risk.

(d) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall continue the development of the fully integrated Space Launch System, including an upper stage needed to go beyond low-Earth orbit, in order to safely enable human space exploration of the Moon, Mars, and beyond over the course of the next century as required in section 302(c) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18322(c)).

(e) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report addressing the ability of Orion to meet the needs and the minimum capability requirements described in section 303(b)(3) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18323(b)(3)).

(2) CONTENTS.—The report shall detail—

(A) those components and systems of Orion that ensure it is in compliance with section 303(b)(3) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 18323(b)(3));

(B) the expected date that Orion, integrated with a vehicle other than the Space Launch System, could be available to transport crew and cargo to the ISS;

(C) any impacts to the deep space exploration missions under subsection (f) of this section due to enabling Orion to meet the minimum capability requirements described in section 303(b)(3) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 18323(b)(3)) and conducting the mission described in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph; and

(D) the overall cost and schedule impacts associated with enabling Orion to meet the minimum capability requirements described in section 303(b)(3) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 18323(b)(3)) and conducting the mission described in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph.

(f) EXPLORATION MISSIONS.—The Administrator shall continue development of—

(1) an uncrewed exploration mission to demonstrate the capability of both the Space Launch System and Orion as an integrated system by 2018;

(2) subject to applicable human rating processes and requirements, a crewed exploration mission to demonstrate the Space Launch System, including the Core Stage and Exploration Upper Stages, by 2021;

(3) subsequent missions beginning with EM–3 at operational flight rate sufficient to maintain safety and operational readiness using the Space Launch System and Orion to extend into cis-lunar space and eventually to Mars; and

(4) a deep space habitat as a key element in a deep space exploration architecture along with the Space Launch System and Orion.

(g) OTHER USES.—The Administrator shall assess the utility of the Space Launch System for use by the science community and for other Federal Government launch needs, including consideration of overall cost and schedule savings from reduced transit times and increased science returns enabled by the unique capabilities of the Space Launch System.

(h) UTILIZATION REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence, shall prepare a report that addresses the effort and budget required to enable and utilize a cargo variant of the 130-ton Space Launch System configuration described in section 302(c) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18322(c)).

(2) CONTENTS.—In preparing the report, the Administrator shall—

(A) consider the technical requirements of the scientific and national security communities related to a cargo variant of the Space Launch System; and

(B) directly assess the utility and estimated cost savings obtained by using a cargo variant of the Space Launch System for national security and space science missions.

(3) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit the report to the appropriate committees of Congress.

Subtitle C—Journey to Mars

SEC. 431. FINDINGS ON HUMAN SPACE EXPLORATION.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) In accordance with section 204 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (124 Stat. 2813), the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, through its Committee on Human Spaceflight, conducted a review of the goals, core capabilities, and direction of human space flight, and published the findings and recommendations in a 2014 report entitled, ''Pathways to Exploration: Rationales and Approaches for a U.S. Program of Human Space Exploration''.

(2) The Committee on Human Spaceflight included leaders from the aerospace, scientific, security, and policy communities.

(3) With input from the public, the Committee on Human Spaceflight concluded that many practical and aspirational rationales for human space flight together constitute a compelling case for continued national investment and pursuit of human space exploration toward the horizon goal of Mars.

(4) According to the Committee on Human Spaceflight, the rationales include economic benefits, national security, national prestige, inspiring students and other citizens, scientific discovery, human survival, and a sense of shared destiny.

(5) The Committee on Human Spaceflight affirmed that Mars is the appropriate long-term goal for the human space flight program.

(6) The Committee on Human Spaceflight recommended that NASA define a series of sustainable steps and conduct mission planning and technology development as needed to achieve the long-term goal of placing humans on the surface of Mars.

(7) Expanding human presence beyond low-Earth orbit and advancing toward human missions to Mars requires early planning and timely decisions to be made in the near-term on the necessary courses of action for commitments to achieve short-term and long-term goals and objectives.

(8) In addition to the 2014 report described in paragraph (1), there are several independently developed reports or concepts that describe potential Mars architectures or concepts and identify Mars as the long-term goal for human space exploration, including NASA's ''The Global Exploration Roadmap'' of 2013, ''NASA's Journey to Mars–Pioneering Next Steps in Space Exploration'' of 2015, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory's ''Minimal Architecture for Human Journeys to Mars'' of 2015, and Explore Mars' ''The Humans to Mars Report 2016''.

SEC. 432. HUMAN EXPLORATION ROADMAP.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) expanding human presence beyond low-Earth orbit and advancing toward human missions to Mars in the 2030s requires early strategic planning and timely decisions to be made in the near-term on the necessary courses of action for commitments to achieve short-term and long-term goals and objectives;

(2) for strong and sustained United States leadership, a need exists to advance a human exploration roadmap, addressing exploration objectives in collaboration with international, academic, and industry partners;

(3) an approach that incrementally advances toward a long-term goal is one in which nearer-term developments and implementation would influence future development and implementation; and

(4) a human exploration roadmap should begin with low-Earth orbit, then address in greater detail progress beyond low-Earth orbit to cis-lunar space, and then address future missions aimed at human arrival and activities near and then on the surface of Mars.

(b) HUMAN EXPLORATION ROADMAP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall develop a human exploration roadmap, including a critical decision plan, to expand human presence beyond low-Earth orbit to the surface of Mars and beyond, considering potential interim destinations such as cis-lunar space and the moons of Mars.

(2) SCOPE.—The human exploration roadmap shall include—

(A) an integrated set of exploration, science, and other goals and objectives of a United States human space exploration program to achieve the long-term goal of human missions near or on the surface of Mars in the 2030s;

(B) opportunities for international, academic, and industry partnerships for exploration-related systems, services, research, and technology if those opportunities provide cost-savings, accelerate program schedules, or otherwise benefit the goals and objectives developed under subparagraph (A);

(C) sets and sequences of precursor missions in cis-lunar space and other missions or activities necessary—

(i) to demonstrate the proficiency of the capabilities and technologies identified under subparagraph (D); and

(ii) to meet the goals and objectives developed under subparagraph (A), including anticipated timelines and missions for the Space Launch System and Orion;

(D) an identification of the specific capabilities and technologies, including the Space Launch System, Orion, a deep space habitat, and other capabilities, that facilitate the goals and objectives developed under subparagraph (A);

(E) a description of how cis-lunar elements, objectives, and activities advance the human exploration of Mars;

(F) an assessment of potential human health and other risks, including radiation exposure;

(G) mitigation plans, whenever possible, to address the risks identified in subparagraph (F);

(H) a description of those technologies already under development across the Federal Government or by other entities that facilitate the goals and objectives developed under subparagraph (A);

(I) a specific process for the evolution of the capabilities of the fully integrated Orion with the Space Launch System and a description of how these systems facilitate the goals and objectives developed under subparagraph (A) and demonstrate the capabilities and technologies described in subparagraph (D);

(J) a description of the capabilities and technologies that need to be demonstrated or research data that could be gained through the utilization of the ISS and the status of the development of such capabilities and technologies;

(K) a framework for international cooperation in the development of all capabilities and technologies identified under this section, including an assessment of the risks posed by relying on international partners for capabilities and technologies on the critical path of development;

(L) a process for partnering with nongovernmental entities using Space Act Agreements or other acquisition instruments for future human space exploration; and

(M) include information on the phasing of planned intermediate destinations, Mars mission risk areas and potential risk mitigation approaches, technology requirements and phasing of required technology development activities, the management strategy to be followed, related ISS activities, planned international collaborative activities, potential commercial contributions, and other activities relevant to the achievement of the goal established in this section.

(3) CONSIDERATIONS.—In developing the human exploration roadmap, the Administrator shall consider—

(A) using key exploration capabilities, namely the Space Launch System and Orion;

(B) using existing commercially available technologies and capabilities or those technologies and capabilities being developed by industry for commercial purposes;

(C) establishing an organizational approach to ensure collaboration and coordination among NASA's Mission Directorates under section 821, when appropriate, including to collect and return to Earth a sample from the Martian surface;

(D) building upon the initial uncrewed mission, EM–1, and first crewed mission, EM–2, of the Space Launch System and Orion to establish a sustainable cadence of missions extending human exploration missions into cis-lunar space, including anticipated timelines and milestones;

(E) developing the robotic and precursor missions and activities that will demonstrate, test, and develop key technologies and capabilities essential for achieving human missions to Mars, including long-duration human operations beyond low-Earth orbit, space suits, solar electric propulsion, deep space habitats, environmental control life support systems, Mars lander and ascent vehicle, entry, descent, landing, ascent, Mars surface systems, and in-situ resource utilization;

(F) demonstrating and testing 1 or more habitat modules in cis-lunar space to prepare for Mars missions;

(G) using public-private, firm fixed-price partnerships, where practicable;

(H) collaborating with international, academic, and industry partners, when appropriate;

(I) any risks to human health and sensitive onboard technologies, including radiation exposure;

(J) any risks identified through research outcomes under the NASA Human Research Program's Behavioral Health Element; and

(K) the recommendations and ideas of several independently developed reports or concepts that describe potential Mars architectures or concepts and identify Mars as the long-term goal for human space exploration, including the reports described under section 431.

(4) CRITICAL DECISION PLAN ON HUMAN SPACE EXPLORATION.—As part of the human exploration roadmap, the Administrator shall include a critical decision plan—

(A) identifying and defining key decisions guiding human space exploration priorities and plans that need to be made before June 30, 2020, including decisions that may guide human space exploration capability development, precursor missions, long-term missions, and activities;

(B) defining decisions needed to maximize efficiencies and resources for reaching the near, intermediate, and long-term goals and objectives of human space exploration; and

(C) identifying and defining timelines and milestones for a sustainable cadence of missions beginning with EM–3 for the Space Launch System and Orion to extend human exploration from cis-lunar space to the surface of Mars.

(5) REPORTS.—

(A) INITIAL HUMAN EXPLORATION ROADMAP.—The Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress—

(i) an initial human exploration roadmap, including a critical decision plan, before December 1, 2017; and

(ii) an updated human exploration roadmap periodically as the Administrator considers necessary but not less than biennially.

(B) CONTENTS.—Each human exploration roadmap under this paragraph shall include a description of—

(i) the achievements and goals accomplished in the process of developing such capabilities and technologies during the 2-year period prior to the submission of the human exploration roadmap; and

(ii) the expected goals and achievements in the following 2- year period.

(C) SUBMISSION WITH BUDGET.—Each human exploration roadmap under this section shall be included in the budget for that fiscal year transmitted to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 433. ADVANCED SPACE SUIT CAPABILITY.

Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a detailed plan for achieving an advanced space suit capability that aligns with the crew needs for exploration enabled by the Space Launch System and Orion, including an evaluation of the merit of delivering the planned suit system for use on the ISS.

SEC. 434. ASTEROID ROBOTIC REDIRECT MISSION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) NASA initially estimated that the Asteroid Robotic Redirect Mission would launch in December 2020 and cost no more than $1,250,000,000, excluding launch and operations.

(2) On July 15, 2016, NASA conducted its Key Decision Point-B review of the Asteroid Robotic Redirect Mission or approval for Phase B in mission formulation.

(3) During the Key Decision Point-B review, NASA estimated that costs have grown to $1,400,000,000 excluding launch and operations for a launch in December 2021 and the agency must evaluate whether to accept the increase or reduce the Asteroid Robotic Redirect Mission's scope to stay within the cost cap set by the Administrator.

(4) In April 2015, the NASA Advisory Council—

(A) issued a finding that—

(i) high-performance solar electric propulsion will likely be an important part of an architecture to send humans to Mars; and

(ii) maneuvering a large test mass is not necessary to provide a valid in-space test of a new solar electric propulsion stage;

(B) determined that a solar electric propulsion mission will contribute more directly to the goal of sending humans to Mars if the mission is focused entirely on development and validation of the solar electric propulsion stage; and

(C) determined that other possible motivations for acquiring and maneuvering a boulder, such as asteroid science and planetary defense, do not have value commensurate with their probable cost.

(5) The Asteroid Robotic Redirect Mission is competing for resources with other critical exploration development programs, including the Space Launch System, Orion, commercial crew, and a habitation module.

(6) In 2014, the NASA Advisory Council recommended that NASA conduct an independent cost and technical assessment of the Asteroid Robotic Redirect Mission.

(7) In 2015, the NASA Advisory Council recommended that NASA preserve the following key objectives if the program needed to be descoped:

(A) Development of high power solar electric propulsion.

(B) Ability to maneuver in a low gravity environment in deep space.

(8) In January 2015 and July 2015, the NASA Advisory Council expressed its concern to NASA about the potential for growing costs for the program and highlighted that choices would need to be made about the program's content.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the technological and scientific goals of the Asteroid Robotic Redirect Mission have not been demonstrated to Congress to be commensurate with the cost; and

(2) alternative missions may provide a more cost effective and scientifically beneficial means to demonstrate the technologies needed for a human mission to Mars that would otherwise be demonstrated by the Asteroid Robotic Redirect Mission.

(c) EVALUATION AND REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall—

(1) conduct an evaluation of—

(A) alternative approaches to the Asteroid Robotic Redirect Mission for demonstrating the technologies and capabilities needed for a human mission to Mars that would otherwise be demonstrated by the Asteroid Robotic Redirect Mission;

(B) the scientific and technical benefits of the alternative approaches under subparagraph (A) to future human space exploration compared to scientific and technical benefits of the Asteroid Redirect Robotic Mission;

(C) the commercial benefits of the alternative approaches identified in subparagraph (A), including the impact on the development of domestic solar electric propulsion technology to bolster United States competitiveness in the global marketplace; and

(D) a comparison of the estimated costs of the alternative approaches identified in subparagraph (A); and

(2) submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the evaluation under paragraph (1), including any recommendations.

SEC. 435. MARS 2033 REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall contract with an independent, non-governmental systems engineering and technical assistance organization to study a Mars human space flight mission to be launched in 2033.

(b) CONTENTS.—The study shall include—

(1) a technical development, test, fielding, and operations plan using the Space Launch System, Orion, and other systems to successfully launch such a Mars human space flight mission by 2033;

(2) an annual budget profile, including cost estimates, for the technical development, test, fielding, and operations plan to carry out a Mars human space flight mission by 2033; and

(3) a comparison of the annual budget profile to the 5-year budget profile contained in the President's budget request for fiscal year 2017 under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the study, including findings and recommendations regarding the Mars 2033 human space flight mission described in subsection (a).

(d) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 60 days after the date the report is submitted under subsection (c), the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress an assessment by the NASA Advisory Council of whether the proposal for a Mars human space flight mission to be launched in 2033 is in the strategic interests of the United States in space exploration.

Subtitle D—TREAT Astronauts Act

SEC. 441. SHORT TITLE.

This subtitle may be cited as the ''To Research, Evaluate, Assess, and Treat Astronauts Act'' or the ''TREAT Astronauts Act''.

SEC. 442. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Human space exploration can pose significant challenges and is full of substantial risk, which has ultimately claimed the lives of 24 NASA astronauts serving in the line of duty.

(2) As United States government astronauts participate in long-duration and exploration space flight missions they may experience increased health risks, such as vision impairment, bone demineralization, and behavioral health and performance risks, and may be exposed to galactic cosmic radiation. Exposure to high levels of radiation and microgravity can result in acute and long-term health consequences that can increase the risk of cancer and tissue degeneration and have potential effects on the musculoskeletal system, central nervous system, cardiovascular system, immune function, and vision.

(3) To advance the goal of long-duration and exploration space flight missions, United States government astronaut Scott Kelly participated in a 1-year twins study in space while his identical twin brother, former United States government astronaut Mark Kelly, acted as a human control specimen on Earth, providing an understanding of the physical, behavioral, microbiological, and molecular reaction of the human body to an extended period of time in space.

(4) Since the Administration currently provides medical monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment for United States government astronauts during their active employment, given the unknown long-term health consequences of long-duration space exploration, the Administration has requested statutory authority from Congress to provide medical monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment to former United States government astronauts for psychological and medical conditions associated with human space flight.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States should continue to seek the unknown and lead the world in space exploration and scientific discovery as the Administration prepares for long-duration and exploration space flight in deep space and an eventual mission to Mars;

(2) data relating to the health of astronauts will become increasingly valuable to improving our understanding of many diseases humans face on Earth;

(3) the Administration should provide the type of monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment described in subsection (a) only for conditions the Administration considers unique to the training or exposure to the space flight environment of United States government astronauts and should not require any former United States Government astronauts to participate in the Administration's monitoring;

(4) such monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment should not replace a former United States government astronaut's private health insurance;

(5) expanded data acquired from such monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment should be used to tailor treatment, inform the requirements for new space flight medical hardware, and develop controls in order to prevent disease occurrence in the astronaut corps; and

(6) the 340-day space mission of Scott Kelly aboard the ISS—

(A) was pivotal for the goal of the United States for humans to explore deep space and Mars as the mission generated new insight into how the human body adjusts to weightlessness, isolation, radiation, and the stress of long-duration space flight; and

(B) will help support the physical and mental well-being of astronauts during longer space exploration missions in the future.

SEC. 443. MEDICAL MONITORING AND RESEARCH RELATING TO HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 201 of title 51, United States Code, as amended by section 305 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 20149. Medical monitoring and research relating to human space flight

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator may provide for—

''(1) the medical monitoring and diagnosis of a former United States government astronaut or a former payload specialist for conditions that the Administrator considers potentially associated with human space flight; and

''(2) the treatment of a former United States government astronaut or a former payload specialist for conditions that the Administrator considers associated with human space flight, including scientific and medical tests for psychological and medical conditions.

''(b) REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) NO COST SHARING.—The medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment described in subsection (a) shall be provided without any deductible, copayment, or other cost sharing obligation.

''(2) ACCESS TO LOCAL SERVICES.—The medical monitoring, diagnosis, and treatment described in subsection (a) may be provided by a local health care provider if it is unadvisable due to the health of the applicable former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist for that former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist to travel to the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, as determined by the Administrator.

''(3) SECONDARY PAYMENT.—Payment or reimbursement for the medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment described in subsection (a) shall be secondary to any obligation of the United States Government or any third party under any other provision of law or contractual agreement to pay for or provide such medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment. Any costs for items and services that may be provided by the Administrator for medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment under subsection (a) that are not paid for or provided under such other provision of law or contractual agreement, due to the application of deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, other cost sharing, or otherwise, are reimbursable by the Administrator on behalf of the former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist involved to the extent such items or services are authorized to be provided by the Administrator for such medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment under subsection (a).

''(4) CONDITIONAL PAYMENT.—The Administrator may provide for conditional payments

for or provide medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment described in subsection (a) that is obligated to be paid for or provided by the United States or any third party under any other provision of law or contractual agreement to pay for or provide such medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment if—

''(A) payment for (or the provision of) such medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment services has not been made (or provided) or cannot reasonably be expected to be made (or provided) promptly by the United States or such third party, respectively; and

''(B) such payment (or such provision of services) by the Administrator is conditioned on reimbursement by the United States or such third party, respectively, for such medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment.

''(c) EXCLUSIONS.—The Administrator may not—

''(1) provide for medical monitoring or diagnosis of a former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist under subsection (a) for any psychological or medical condition that is not potentially associated with human space flight;

''(2) provide for treatment of a former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist under subsection (a) for any psychological or medical condition that is not associated with human space flight; or

''(3) require a former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist to participate in the medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment authorized under subsection (a).

''(d) PRIVACY.—Consistent with applicable provisions of Federal law relating to privacy, the Administrator shall protect the privacy of all medical records generated under subsection (a) and accessible to the Administration.

''(e) REGULATIONS.—The Administrator shall promulgate such regulations as are necessary to carry out this section.

''(f) DEFINITION OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ASTRONAUT.—In this section, the term 'United States government astronaut' has the meaning given the term 'government astronaut' in section 50902, except it does not include an individual who is an international partner astronaut.

''(g) DATA USE AND DISCLOSURE.—The Administrator may use or disclose data acquired in the course of medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment of a former United States government astronaut or a former payload specialist under subsection (a), in accordance with subsection (d). Former United States government astronaut or former payload specialist participation in medical monitoring, diagnosis, or treatment under subsection (a) shall constitute consent for the Administrator to use or disclose such data.''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for chapter 201 of title 51, United States Code, as amended by section 305 of this Act, is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 20148 the following:

''20149. Medical monitoring and research relating to human space flight.''.

(c) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each fiscal year, not later than the date of submission of the President's annual budget request for that fiscal year under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, the Administrator shall publish a report, in accordance with applicable Federal privacy laws, on the activities of the Administration under section 20149 of title 51, United States Code.

(2) CONTENTS.—Each report under paragraph (1) shall include a detailed cost accounting of the Administration's activities under section 20149 of title 51, United States Code, and a 5-year budget estimate.

(3) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—The Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress each report under paragraph (1) not later than the date of submission of the President's annual budget request for that fiscal year under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code.

(d) COST ESTIMATE.—

(1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with an independent external organization to undertake an independent cost estimate of the cost to the Administration and the Federal Government to implement and administer the activities of the Administration under section 20149 of title 51, United States Code. The independent external organization may not be a NASA entity, such as the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance.

(2) SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress the independent cost estimate under paragraph (1).

(e) PRIVACY STUDY.—

(1) STUDY.—The Administrator shall carry out a study on any potential privacy or legal issues related to the possible sharing beyond the Federal Government of data acquired under the activities of the Administration under section 20149 of title 51, United States Code.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report containing the results of the study carried out under paragraph (1).

(f) INSPECTOR GENERAL AUDIT.—The Inspector General of NASA shall periodically audit or review, as the Inspector General considers necessary to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse, the activities of the Administration under section 20149 of title 51, United States Code.

TITLE V—ADVANCING SPACE SCIENCE

SEC. 501. MAINTAINING A BALANCED SPACE SCIENCE PORTFOLIO.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SCIENCE PORTFOLIO.—Congress reaffirms the sense of Congress that—

(1) a balanced and adequately funded set of activities, consisting of research and analysis grant programs, technology development, suborbital research activities, and small, medium, and large space missions, contributes to a robust and productive science program and serves as a catalyst for innovation and discovery; and

(2) the Administrator should set science priorities by following the guidance provided by the scientific community through the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's decadal surveys.

(b) POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States to ensure, to the extent practicable, a steady cadence of large, medium, and small science missions.

SEC. 502. PLANETARY SCIENCE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) Administration support for planetary science is critical to enabling greater understanding of the solar system and the origin of the Earth;

(2) the United States leads the world in planetary science and can augment its success in that area with appropriate international, academic, and industry partnerships;

(3) a mix of small, medium, and large planetary science missions is required to sustain a steady cadence of planetary exploration; and

(4) robotic planetary exploration is a key component of preparing for future human exploration.

(b) MISSION PRIORITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with the priorities established in the most recent Planetary Science Decadal Survey, the Administrator shall ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, the completion of a balanced set of Discovery, New Frontiers, and Flagship missions at the cadence recommended by the most recent Planetary Science Decadal Survey.

(2) MISSION PRIORITY ADJUSTMENTS.—Consistent with the set of missions described in paragraph (1), and while maintaining the continuity of scientific data and steady development of capabilities and technologies, the Administrator may seek, if necessary, adjustments to mission priorities, schedule, and scope in light of changing budget projections.

SEC. 503. JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the James Webb Space Telescope will—

(A) significantly advance our understanding of star and planet formation, and improve our knowledge of the early universe; and

(B) support United States leadership in astrophysics;

(2) consistent with annual Government Accountability Office reviews of the James Webb Space Telescope program, the Administrator should continue robust surveillance of the performance of the James Webb Space Telescope project and continue to improve the reliability of cost estimates and contractor performance data and other major space flight projects in order to enhance NASA's ability to successfully deliver the James Webb Space Telescope on-time and within budget;

(3) the on-time and on-budget delivery of the James Webb Space Telescope is a high congressional priority; and

(4) the Administrator should ensure that integrated testing is appropriately timed and sufficiently comprehensive to enable potential issues to be identified and addressed early enough to be handled within the James Webb Space Telescope's development schedule and prior to its launch.

SEC. 504. WIDE-FIELD INFRARED SURVEY TELESCOPE.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope (referred to in this section as ''WFIRST'') mission has the potential to enable scientific discoveries that will transform our understanding of the universe; and

(2) the Administrator, to the extent practicable, should make progress on the technologies and capabilities needed to position the Administration to meet the objectives, as outlined in the 2010 National Academies' Astronomy and Astrophysics Decadal Survey, in a way that maximizes the scientific productivity of meeting those objectives for the resources invested.

(b) CONTINUITY OF DEVELOPMENT.—The Administrator shall ensure that the concept definition and pre-formulation activities of the WFIRST mission continue while the James Webb Space Telescope is being completed.

SEC. 505. MARS 2020 ROVER.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Mars 2020 mission, to develop a Mars rover and to enable the return of samples to Earth, should remain a priority for NASA; and

(2) the Mars 2020 mission—

(A) should significantly increase our understanding of Mars;

(B) should help determine whether life previously existed on that planet; and

(C) should provide opportunities to gather knowledge and demonstrate technologies that address the challenges of future human expeditions to Mars.

SEC. 506. EUROPA.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Studies of Europa, Jupiter's moon, indicate that Europa may provide a habitable environment, as it contains key ingredients known to support life.

(2) In 2012, using the Hubble Space Telescope, NASA scientists observed water vapor around the south polar region of Europa, which provides potential evidence of water plumes in that region.

(3) For decades, the Europa mission has consistently ranked as a high priority mission for the scientific community.

(4) The Europa mission was ranked as the top priority mission in the previous Planetary Science Decadal Survey and ranked as the second-highest priority in the current Planetary Science Decadal Survey.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Europa mission could provide another avenue in which to capitalize on our Nation's current investment in the Space Launch System that would significantly reduce the transit time for such a deep space mission; and

(2) a scientific, robotic exploration mission to Europa, as prioritized in both Planetary Science Decadal Surveys, should be supported.

SEC. 507. CONGRESSIONAL DECLARATION OF POLICY AND PURPOSE.

Section 20102(d) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(10) The search for life's origin, evolution, distribution, and future in the universe.''.

SEC. 508. EXTRASOLAR PLANET EXPLORATION STRATEGY.

(a) STRATEGY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies to develop a science strategy for the study and exploration of extrasolar planets, including the use of the Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite, the James Webb Space Telescope, a potential Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope mission, or any other telescope, spacecraft, or instrument, as appropriate.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The strategy shall—

(A) outline key scientific questions;

(B) identify the most promising research in the field;

(C) indicate the extent to which the mission priorities in existing decadal surveys address the key extrasolar planet research and exploration goals;

(D) identify opportunities for coordination with international partners, commercial partners, and not-for-profit partners; and

(E) make recommendations regarding the activities under subparagraphs (A) through (D), as appropriate.

(b) USE OF STRATEGY.—The Administrator shall use the strategy—

(1) to inform roadmaps, strategic plans, and other activities of the Administration as they relate to extrasolar planet research and exploration; and

(2) to provide a foundation for future activities and initiatives related to extrasolar planet research and exploration.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the National Academies shall submit to the Administrator and to the appropriate committees of Congress a report containing the strategy developed under subsection (a).

SEC. 509. ASTROBIOLOGY STRATEGY.

(a) STRATEGY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies to develop a science strategy for astrobiology that would outline key scientific questions, identify the most promising research in the field, and indicate the extent to which the mission priorities in existing decadal surveys address the search for life's origin, evolution, distribution, and future in the Universe.

(2) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The strategy shall include recommendations for coordination with international partners.

(b) USE OF STRATEGY.—The Administrator shall use the strategy developed under subsection (a) in planning and funding research and other activities and initiatives in the field of astrobiology.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the National Academies shall submit to the Administrator and to the appropriate committees of Congress a report containing the strategy developed under subsection (a).

SEC. 510. ASTROBIOLOGY PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing how the Administration can expand collaborative partnerships to study life's origin, evolution, distribution, and future in the universe.

SEC. 511. NEAR-EARTH OBJECTS.

Section 321 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005 (51 U.S.C. note prec. 71101) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) PROGRAM REPORT.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives, not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017, an initial report that provides—

''(1) recommendations for carrying out the Survey program and an associated proposed budget;

''(2) an analysis of possible options that the Administration could employ to divert an object on a likely collision course with Earth; and

''(3) a description of the status of efforts to coordinate and cooperate with other countries to discover hazardous asteroids and comets, plan a mitigation strategy, and implement that strategy in the event of the discovery of an object on a likely collision course with Earth.

''(f) ANNUAL REPORTS.—After the initial report under subsection (e), the Administrator shall annually transmit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

''(1) a summary of all activities carried out under subsection (d) since the date of enactment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017, including the progress toward achieving 90 percent completion of the survey described in subsection (d); and

''(2) a summary of expenditures for all activities carried out under subsection (d) since the date of enactment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017.

''(g) ASSESSMENT.—The Administrator, in collaboration with other relevant Federal agencies, shall carry out a technical and scientific assessment of the capabilities and resources—

''(1) to accelerate the survey described in subsection (d); and

''(2) to expand the Administration's Near-Earth Object Program to include the detection, tracking, cataloguing, and characterization of potentially hazardous near-Earth objects less than 140 meters in diameter.

''(h) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017, the Administrator shall transmit the results of the assessment under subsection (g) to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives.''.

SEC. 512. NEAR-EARTH OBJECTS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Administration should seek to leverage the capabilities of the private sector and philanthropic organizations to the maximum extent practicable in carrying out the Near-Earth Object Survey Program in order to meet the goal of that program under section 321(d)(1) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005 (51 U.S.C. note prec. 71101(d)(1)).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing how the Administration can expand collaborative partnerships to detect, track, catalogue, and categorize near-Earth objects.

SEC. 513. ASSESSMENT OF SCIENCE MISSION EXTENSIONS.

Section 30504 of title 51, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 30504. Assessment of science mission extensions

''(a) ASSESSMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall carry out triennial reviews within each of the Science divisions to assess the cost and benefits of extending the date of the termination of data collection for those missions that exceed their planned missions' lifetime.

''(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In conducting an assessment under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall consider whether and how extending missions impacts the start of future missions.

''(b) CONSULTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF INSTRUMENTS ON MISSIONS.—When deciding whether to extend a mission that has an operational component, the Administrator shall—

''(1) consult with any affected Federal agency; and

''(2) take into account the potential benefits of instruments on missions that are beyond their planned mission lifetime.

''(c) REPORTS.—The Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives, at the same time as the submission to Congress of the Administration's annual budget request for each fiscal year, a report detailing any assessment under subsection (a) that was carried out during the previous year.''.

SEC. 514. STRATOSPHERIC OBSERVATORY FOR INFRARED ASTRONOMY.

The Administrator may not terminate science operations of the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy before December 31, 2017.

SEC. 515. RADIOISOTOPE POWER SYSTEMS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) exploration of the outer reaches of the solar system is enabled by radioisotope power systems;

(2) establishing continuity in the production of the material needed for radioisotope power systems is essential to maintaining the availability of such systems for future deep space exploration missions; and

(3) Federal agencies supporting the Administration through the production of such material should do so in a cost effective manner so as not to impose excessive reimbursement requirements on the Administration.

(b) ANALYSIS OF REQUIREMENTS AND RISKS.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Administrator, in consultation with the heads of other Federal agencies, shall conduct an analysis of—

(1) the requirements of the Administration for radioisotope power system material that is needed to carry out planned, high priority robotic missions in the solar system and other surface exploration activities beyond low-Earth orbit; and

(2) the risks to missions of the Administration in meeting those requirements, or any additional requirements, due to a lack of adequate radioisotope power system material.

(c) CONTENTS OF ANALYSIS.—The analysis conducted under subsection (b) shall—

(1) detail the Administration's current projected mission requirements and associated timeframes for radioisotope power system material;

(2) explain the assumptions used to determine the Administration's requirements for the material, including—

(A) the planned use of advanced thermal conversion technology such as advanced thermocouples and Stirling generators and converters; and

(B) the risks and implications of, and contingencies for, any delays or unanticipated technical challenges affecting or related to the Administration's mission plans for the anticipated use of advanced thermal conversion technology;

(3) assess the risk to the Administration's programs of any potential delays in achieving the schedule and milestones for planned domestic production of radioisotope power system material;

(4) outline a process for meeting any additional Administration requirements for the material;

(5) estimate the incremental costs required to increase the amount of material produced each year, if such an increase is needed to support additional Administration requirements for the material;

(6) detail how the Administration and other Federal agencies will manage, operate, and fund production facilities and the design and development of all radioisotope power systems used by the Administration and other Federal agencies as necessary;

(7) specify the steps the Administration will take, in consultation with the Department of Energy, to preserve the infrastructure and workforce necessary for production of radioisotope power systems and ensure that its reimbursements to the Department of Energy associated with such preservation are equitable and justified; and

(8) detail how the Administration has implemented or rejected the recommendations from the National Research Council's 2009 report titled ''Radioisotope Power Systems: An Imperative for Maintaining U.S. Leadership in Space Exploration.''

(d) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit the results of the analysis to the appropriate committees of Congress.

SEC. 516. ASSESSMENT OF MARS ARCHITECTURE.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to assess—

(1) the Administration's Mars exploration architecture and its responsiveness to the strategies, priorities, and guidelines put forward by the National Academies' planetary science decadal surveys and other relevant National Academies Mars-related reports;

(2) the long-term goals of the Administration's Mars Exploration Program and such program's ability to optimize the science return, given the current fiscal posture of the program;

(3) the Mars exploration architecture's relationship to Mars-related activities to be undertaken by foreign agencies and organizations; and

(4) the extent to which the Mars exploration architecture represents a reasonably balanced mission portfolio.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit the results of the assessment to the appropriate committees of Congress.

SEC. 517. COLLABORATION.

The Administration shall continue to develop first-of-a-kind instruments that, once proved, can be transitioned to other agencies for operations. Whenever responsibilities for the development of sensors or for measurements are transferred to the Administration from another agency, the Administration shall seek, to the extent possible, to be reimbursed for the assumption of such responsibilities.

TITLE VI—AERONAUTICS

SEC. 601. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON AERONAUTICS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) a robust aeronautics research portfolio will help maintain the United States status as a leader in aviation, enhance the competitiveness of the United States in the world economy, and improve the quality of life of all citizens;

(2) aeronautics research is essential to the Administration's mission, continues to be an important core element of the Administration's mission, and should be supported;

(3) the Administrator should coordinate and consult with relevant Federal agencies and the private sector to minimize duplication of efforts and leverage resources; and

(4) carrying aeronautics research to a level of maturity that allows the Administration's research results to be transferred to the users, whether private or public sector, is critical to their eventual adoption.

SEC. 602. TRANSFORMATIVE AERONAUTICS RESEARCH.

It is the sense of Congress that the Administrator should look strategically into the future and ensure that the Administration's Center personnel are at the leading edge of aeronautics research by encouraging investigations into the early-stage advancement of new processes, novel concepts, and innovative technologies that have the potential to meet national aeronautics needs.

SEC. 603. HYPERSONIC RESEARCH.

(a) ROADMAP FOR HYPERSONIC RESEARCH.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall develop and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a research and development roadmap for hypersonic aircraft research.

(b) OBJECTIVE.—The objective of the roadmap is to explore hypersonic science and technology using air-breathing propulsion concepts, through a mix of theoretical work, basic and applied research, and development of flight research demonstration vehicles.

(c) CONTENTS.—The roadmap shall recommend appropriate Federal agency contributions, coordination efforts, and technology milestones.

SEC. 604. SUPERSONIC RESEARCH.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the ability to fly commercial aircraft over land at supersonic speeds without adverse impacts on the environment or on local communities could open new global markets and enable new transportation capabilities; and

(2) continuing the Administration's research program is necessary to assess the impact in a relevant environment of commercial supersonic flight operations and provide the basis for establishing appropriate sonic boom standards for such flight operations.

(b) ROADMAP FOR SUPERSONIC RESEARCH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall develop and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a roadmap that allows for flexible funding profiles for supersonic aeronautics research and development.

(2) OBJECTIVE.—The objective of the roadmap is to develop and demonstrate, in a relevant environment, airframe and propulsion technologies to minimize the environmental impact, including noise, of supersonic overland flight in an efficient and economical manner.

(3) CONTENTS.—The roadmap shall include—

(A) the baseline research as embodied by the Administration's existing research on supersonic flight;

(B) a list of specific technological, environmental, and other challenges that must be overcome to minimize the environmental impact, including noise, of supersonic overland flight;

(C) a research plan to address the challenges under subparagraph (B), including a project timeline for accomplishing relevant research goals;

(D) a plan for coordination with stakeholders, including relevant government agencies and industry; and

(E) a plan for how the Administration will ensure that sonic boom research is coordinated as appropriate with relevant Federal agencies.

SEC. 605. ROTORCRAFT RESEARCH.

(a) ROADMAP FOR ROTORCRAFT RESEARCH.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall prepare and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a roadmap for research relating to rotorcraft and other runway-independent air vehicles.

(b) OBJECTIVE.—The objective of the roadmap is to develop and demonstrate improved safety, noise, and environmental impact in a relevant environment.

(c) CONTENTS.—The roadmap shall include specific goals for the research, a timeline for implementation, metrics for success, and guidelines for collaboration and coordination with industry and other Federal agencies.

TITLE VII—SPACE TECHNOLOGY

SEC. 701. SPACE TECHNOLOGY INFUSION.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SPACE TECHNOLOGY.—It is the sense of Congress that space technology is critical—

(1) to developing technologies and capabilities that will make the Administration's core missions more affordable and more reliable;

(2) to enabling a new class of Administration missions beyond low-Earth orbit; and

(3) to improving technological capabilities and promote innovation for the Administration and the Nation.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON PROPULSION TECHNOLOGY.—It is the sense of Congress

that advancing propulsion technology would improve the efficiency of trips to Mars and could shorten travel time to Mars, reduce astronaut health risks, and reduce radiation exposure, consumables, and mass of materials required for the journey.

(c) POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States that the Administrator shall develop technologies to support the Administration's core missions, as described in section 2(3) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18301(3)), and support sustained investments in early stage innovation, fundamental research, and technologies to expand the boundaries of the national aerospace enterprise.

(d) PROPULSION TECHNOLOGIES.—A goal of propulsion technologies developed under subsection (c) shall be to significantly reduce human travel time to Mars.

SEC. 702. SPACE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM.

(a) SPACE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Administrator shall conduct a space technology program (referred to in this section as the ''Program'') to research and develop advanced space technologies that could deliver innovative solutions across the Administration's space exploration and science missions.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In conducting the Program, the Administrator shall consider—

(1) the recommendations of the National Academies' review of the Administration's Space Technology roadmaps and priorities; and

(2) the applicable enabling aspects of the stepping stone approach to exploration under section 70504 of title 51, United States Code.

(c) REQUIREMENTS.—In conducting the Program, the Administrator shall—

(1) to the extent practicable, use a competitive process to select research and development projects;

(2) to the extent practicable and appropriate, use small satellites and the Administration's suborbital and ground-based platforms to demonstrate space technology concepts and developments; and

(3) as appropriate, partner with other Federal agencies, universities, private industry, and foreign countries.

(d) SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS.—The Administrator shall organize and manage the Administration's Small Business Innovation Research Program and Small Business Technology Transfer Program within the Program.

(e) NONDUPLICATION CERTIFICATION.—The Administrator shall submit a budget for each fiscal year, as transmitted to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, that avoids duplication of projects, programs, or missions conducted by Program with other projects, programs, or missions conducted by another office or directorate of the Administration.

(f) COLLABORATION, COORDINATION, AND ALIGNMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall—

(A) ensure that the Administration's projects, programs, and activities in support of technology research and development of advanced space technologies are fully coordinated and aligned;

(B) ensure that the results the projects, programs, and activities under subparagraph (A) are shared and leveraged within the Administration; and

(C) ensure that the organizational responsibility for research and development activities in support of human space exploration not initiated as of the date of enactment of this Act is established on the basis of a sound rationale.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that projects, programs, and missions being conducted by the Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate in support of research and development of advanced space technologies and systems focusing on human space exploration should continue in that Directorate.

(g) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide to the appropriate committees of Congress a report—

(1) comparing the Administration's space technology investments with the high-priority technology areas identified by the National Academies in the National Research Council's report on the Administration's Space Technology Roadmaps; and

(2) including—

(A) identification of how the Administration will address any gaps between the agency's investments and the recommended technology areas, including a projection of funding requirements; and

(B) identification of the rationale described in subsection (f)(1)(C).

(h) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Administrator shall include in the Administration's annual budget request for each fiscal year the rationale for assigning organizational responsibility for, in the year prior to the budget fiscal year, each initiated project, program, and mission focused on research and development of advanced technologies for human space exploration.

TITLE VIII—MAXIMIZING EFFICIENCY

Subtitle A—Agency Information Technology and Cybersecurity

SEC. 811. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, in a manner that reflects the unique nature of NASA's mission and expertise—

(1) ensure the NASA Chief Information Officer, Mission Directorates, and Centers have appropriate roles in the management, governance, and oversight processes related to information technology operations and investments and information security programs for the protection of NASA systems;

(2) ensure the NASA Chief Information Officer has the appropriate resources and insight to oversee NASA information technology and information security operations and investments;

(3) provide an information technology program management framework to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of information technology investments, including relying on metrics for identifying and reducing potential duplication, waste, and cost;

(4) improve the operational linkage between the NASA Chief Information Officer and each NASA mission directorate, center, and mission support office to ensure both agency and mission needs are considered in agency-wide information technology and information security management and oversight;

(5) review the portfolio of information technology investments and spending, including information technology-related investments included as part of activities within NASA mission directorates that may not be considered information technology, to ensure investments are recognized and reported appropriately based on guidance from the Office of Management and Budget;

(6) consider appropriate revisions to the charters of information technology boards and councils that inform information technology investment and operation decisions; and

(7) consider whether the NASA Chief Information Officer should have a seat on any boards or councils described in paragraph (6).

(b) GAO STUDY.—

(1) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study of the effectiveness of the Administration's Information Technology Governance in ensuring information technology resources are aligned with agency missions and are cost effective and secure.

(2) CONTENTS.—The study shall include an assessment of—

(A) the resources available for overseeing Administration-wide information technology operations, investments, and security measures and the NASA Chief Information Officer's visibility and involvement into information technology oversight and access to those resources;

(B) the effectiveness and challenges of the Administration's information technology structure, decision making processes and authorities, including impacts on its ability to implement information security; and

(C) the impact of NASA Chief Information Officer approval authority over information technology investments that exceed a defined monetary threshold, including any potential impacts of such authority on the Administration's missions, flights programs and projects, research activities, and Center operations.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report detailing the results of the study under paragraph (1), including any recommendations.

SEC. 812. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the Administrator shall develop an information technology strategic plan to guide NASA information technology management and strategic objectives.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In developing the strategic plan, the Administrator shall ensure that the strategic plan addresses—

(1) the deadline under section 306(a) of title 5, United States Code; and

(2) the requirements under section 3506 of title 44, United States Code.

(c) CONTENTS.—The strategic plan shall address, in a manner that reflects the unique nature of NASA's mission and expertise—

(1) near and long-term goals and objectives for leveraging information technology;

(2) a plan for how NASA will submit to Congress of a list of information technology projects, including completion dates and risk level in accordance with guidance from the Office of Management and Budget;

(3) an implementation overview for an agency-wide approach to information technology investments and operations, including reducing barriers to cross-center collaboration;

(4) coordination by the NASA Chief Information Officer with centers and mission directorates to ensure that information technology policies are effectively and efficiently implemented across the agency;

(5) a plan to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of information technology investments, including a description of how unnecessarily duplicative, wasteful, legacy, or outdated information technology across NASA will be identified and eliminated, and a schedule for the identification and elimination of such information technology;

(6) a plan for improving the information security of agency information and agency information systems, including improving security control assessments and role-based security training of employees; and

(7) submission by NASA to Congress of information regarding high risk projects and cybersecurity risks.

(d) CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.—The Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress the strategic plan under subsection (a) and any updates thereto.

SEC. 813. CYBERSECURITY.

(a) FINDING.—Congress finds that the security of NASA information and information systems is vital to the success of the mission of the agency.

(b) INFORMATION SECURITY PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall implement the information security plan developed under paragraph (2) and take such further actions as the Administrator considers necessary to improve the information security system in accordance with this section.

(2) INFORMATION SECURITY PLAN.—Subject to paragraphs (3) and (4), the Administrator shall develop an agency-wide information security plan to enhance information security for NASA information and information infrastructure.

(3) REQUIREMENTS.—In developing the plan under paragraph (2), the Administrator shall ensure that the plan—

(A) reflects the unique nature of NASA's mission and expertise;

(B) is informed by policies, standards, guidelines, and directives on information security required for Federal agencies;

(C) is consistent with the standards and guidelines under section 11331 of title 40, United States Code; and

(D) meets applicable National Institute of Standards and Technology information security standards and guidelines.

(4) CONTENTS.—The plan shall address—

(A) an overview of the requirements of the information security system;

(B) an agency-wide risk management framework for information security;

(C) a description of the information security system management controls and common controls that are necessary to ensure compliance with information security-related requirements;

(D) an identification and assignment of roles, responsibilities, and management commitment for information security at the agency;

(E) coordination among organizational entities, including between each center, facility, mission directorate, and mission support office, and among agency entities responsible for different aspects of information security;

(F) the need to protect the information security of mission-critical systems and activities and high-impact and moderate-impact information systems; and

(G) a schedule of frequent reviews and updates, as necessary, of the plan.

SEC. 814. SECURITY MANAGEMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONAL ACCESS.

The Administrator shall notify the appropriate committees of Congress when the agency has implemented the information technology security recommendations from the National Academy of Public Administration on foreign national access management, based on reports from January 2014 and March 2016.

SEC. 815. CYBERSECURITY OF WEB APPLICATIONS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall, in a manner that reflects the unique nature of NASA's mission and expertise—

(1) develop a plan, including such actions and milestones as are necessary, to fully remediate security vulnerabilities of NASA web applications within a timely fashion after discovery; and

(2) provide an update on its plan to implement the recommendation from the NASA Inspector General in the audit report dated July 10, 2014, (IG–14–023) to remove from the Internet or otherwise secure all NASA web applications in development or testing mode.

Subtitle B—Collaboration Among Mission Directorates and Other Matters

SEC. 821. COLLABORATION AMONG MISSION DIRECTORATES.

The Administrator shall encourage an interdisciplinary approach among all NASA mission directorates and divisions, whenever appropriate, for projects or missions—

(1) to improve coordination, and encourage collaboration and early planning on scope;

(2) to determine areas of overlap or alignment;

(3) to find ways to leverage across divisional perspectives to maximize outcomes; and

(4) to be more efficient with resources and funds.

SEC. 822. NASA LAUNCH CAPABILITIES COLLABORATION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Launch Services Program is responsible for the acquisition, management, and technical oversight of commercial launch services for NASA's science and robotic missions.

(2) The Commercial Crew Program is responsible for the acquisition, management, and technical oversight of commercial crew transportation systems.

(3) The Launch Services Program and Commercial Crew Program have worked together to gain exceptional technical insight into the contracted launch service providers that are common to both programs.

(4) The Launch Services Program has a long history of oversight of 12 different launch vehicles and over 80 launches.

(5) Co-location of the Launch Services Program and Commercial Crew Program has enabled the Commercial Crew Program to efficiently obtain the launch vehicle technical expertise of and provide engineering and analytical support to the Commercial Crew Program.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Launch Services Program and Commercial Crew Program each benefit from communication and coordination of launch manifests, technical information, and common launch vehicle insight between the programs; and

(2) such communication and coordination is enabled by the co-location of the programs.

(c) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall pursue a strategy for acquisition of crewed transportation services and non-crewed launch services that continues to enhance communication, collaboration, and coordination between the Launch Services Program and the Commercial Crew Program.

SEC. 823. DETECTION AND AVOIDANCE OF COUNTERFEIT PARTS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) A 2012 investigation by the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate of counterfeit electronic parts in the Department of Defense supply chain from 2009 through 2010 uncovered 1,800 cases and over 1,000,000 counterfeit parts and exposed the threat such counterfeit parts pose to service members and national security.

(2) Since 2010, the Comptroller General of the United States has identified in 3 separate reports the risks and challenges associated with counterfeit parts and counterfeit prevention at both the Department of Defense and NASA, including inconsistent definitions of counterfeit parts, poorly targeted quality control practices, and potential barriers to improvements to these practices.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the presence of counterfeit electronic parts in the NASA supply chain poses a danger to United States government astronauts, crew, and other personnel and a risk to the agency overall.

(c) REGULATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall revise the NASA Supplement to the Federal Acquisition Regulation to improve the detection and avoidance of counterfeit electronic parts in the supply chain.

(2) CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES.—In revising the regulations under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall—

(A) require each covered contractor—

(i) to detect and avoid the use or inclusion of any counterfeit parts in electronic parts or products that contain electronic parts;

(ii) to take such corrective actions as the Administrator considers necessary to remedy the use or inclusion described in clause (i); and

(iii) including a subcontractor, to notify the applicable NASA contracting officer not later than 30 calendar days after the date the covered contractor becomes aware, or has reason to suspect, that any end item, component, part or material contained in supplies purchased by NASA, or purchased by a covered contractor or subcontractor for delivery to, or on behalf of, NASA, contains a counterfeit electronic part or suspect counterfeit electronic part; and

(B) prohibit the cost of counterfeit electronic parts, suspect counterfeit electronic parts, and any corrective action described under subparagraph (A)(ii) from being included as allowable costs under agency contracts, unless—

(i)(I) the covered contractor has an operational system to detect and avoid counterfeit electronic parts and suspect counterfeit electronic parts that has been reviewed and approved by NASA or the Department of Defense; and

(II) the covered contractor has provided the notice under subparagraph (A)(iii); or

(ii) the counterfeit electronic parts or suspect counterfeit electronic parts were provided to the covered contractor as Government property in accordance with part 45 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

(3) SUPPLIERS OF ELECTRONIC PARTS.—In revising the regulations under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall—

(A) require NASA and covered contractors, including subcontractors, at all tiers—

(i) to obtain electronic parts that are in production or currently available in stock from—

(I) the original manufacturers of the parts or their authorized dealers; or

(II) suppliers who obtain such parts exclusively from the original manufacturers of the parts or their authorized dealers; and

(ii) to obtain electronic parts that are not in production or currently available in stock from suppliers that meet qualification requirements established under subparagraph (C);

(B) establish documented requirements consistent with published industry standards or Government contract requirements for—

(i) notification of the agency; and

(ii) inspection, testing, and authentication of electronic parts that NASA or a covered contractor, including a subcontractor, obtains from any source other than a source described in subparagraph (A);

(C) establish qualification requirements, consistent with the requirements of section 2319 of title 10, United States Code, pursuant to which NASA may identify suppliers that have appropriate policies and procedures in place to detect and avoid counterfeit electronic parts and suspect counterfeit electronic parts; and

(D) authorize a covered contractor, including a subcontractor, to identify and use additional suppliers beyond those identified under subparagraph (C) if—

(i) the standards and processes for identifying such suppliers comply with established industry standards;

(ii) the covered contractor assumes responsibility for the authenticity of parts provided by such suppliers under paragraph (2); and

(iii) the selection of such suppliers is subject to review and audit by NASA.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED CONTRACTOR.—The term ''covered contractor'' means a contractor that supplies an electronic part, or a product that contains an electronic part, to NASA.

(2) ELECTRONIC PART.—The term ''electronic part'' means a discrete electronic component, including a microcircuit, transistor, capacitor, resistor, or diode, that is intended for use in a safety or mission critical application.

SEC. 824. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) United States competitiveness in the 21st century requires engaging the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (referred to in this section as ''STEM'') talent in all States;

(2) the Administration is uniquely positioned to educate and inspire students and the broader public on STEM subjects and careers;

(3) the Administration's Education and Communication Offices, Mission Directorates, and Centers have been effective in delivering educational content because of the strong engagement of Administration scientists and engineers in the Administration's education and outreach activities;

(4) the Administration's education and outreach programs, including the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) and the Space Grant College and Fellowship Program, reflect the Administration's successful commitment to growing and diversifying the national science and engineering workforce; and

(5) in order to grow and diversify the Nation's engineering workforce, it is vital for the Administration to bolster programs, such as High Schools United with NASA to Create Hardware (HUNCH) program, that conduct outreach activities to underserved rural communities, vocational schools, and tribal colleges and universities and encourage new participation in the STEM workforce.

(b) CONTINUATION OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall continue engagement with the public and education opportunities for students via all the Administration's mission directorates to the maximum extent practicable.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the Administration's near-term outreach plans for advancing space law education.

SEC. 825. LEVERAGING COMMERCIAL SATELLITE SERVICING CAPABILITIES ACROSS MISSION DIRECTORATES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Refueling and relocating aging satellites to extend their operational lifetimes is a capacity that NASA will substantially benefit from and is important for lowering the costs of ongoing scientific, national security, and commercial satellite operations.

(2) The technologies involved in satellite servicing, such as dexterous robotic arms, propellant transfer systems, and solar electric propulsion, are all critical capabilities to support a human exploration mission to Mars.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) satellite servicing is a vital capability that will bolster the capacity and affordability of NASA's ongoing scientific and human exploration operations while simultaneously enhancing the ability of domestic companies to compete in the global marketplace; and

(2) future NASA satellites and spacecraft across mission directorates should be constructed in a manner that allows for servicing in order to maximize operational longevity and affordability.

(c) LEVERAGING OF CAPABILITIES.—The Administrator shall—

(1) identify orbital assets in both the Science Mission Directorate and the Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate that could benefit from satellite servicing-related technologies; and

(2) work across all NASA mission directorates to evaluate opportunities for the private sector to perform such services or advance technical capabilities by leveraging the technologies and techniques developed by NASA programs and other industry programs.

SEC. 826. FLIGHT OPPORTUNITIES.

(a) DEVELOPMENT OF PAYLOADS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to conduct necessary research, the Administrator shall continue and, as the Administrator considers appropriate, expand the development of technology payloads for—

(A) scientific research; and

(B) investigating new or improved capabilities.

(2) FUNDS.—For the purpose of carrying out paragraph (1), the Administrator shall make funds available for—

(A) flight testing;

(B) payload development; and

(C) hardware related to subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(b) REAFFIRMATION OF POLICY.—Congress reaffirms that the Administrator should provide flight opportunities for payloads to microgravity environments and suborbital altitudes as authorized by section 907 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18405).

SEC. 827. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SMALL CLASS LAUNCH MISSIONS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) Venture Class Launch Services contracts awarded under the Launch Services Program will expand opportunities for future dedicated launches of CubeSats and other small satellites and small orbital science missions; and

(2) principal investigator-led small orbital science missions, including CubeSat class, Small Explorer (SMEX) class, and Venture class, offer valuable opportunities to advance science at low cost, train the next generation of scientists and engineers, and enable participants to acquire skills in systems engineering and systems integration that are critical to maintaining the Nation's leadership in space and to enhancing United States innovation and competitiveness abroad.

SEC. 828. BASELINE AND COST CONTROLS.

Section 30104(a)(1) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by striking ''Procedural Requirements 7120.5c, dated March 22, 2005'' and inserting ''Procedural Requirements 7120.5E, dated August 14, 2012''.

SEC. 829. COMMERCIAL TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PROGRAM.

Section 50116(a) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by inserting '', while protecting national security'' after ''research community''.

SEC. 830. AVOIDING ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST IN MAJOR ADMINISTRATION ACQUISITION PROGRAMS.

(a) REVISED REGULATIONS REQUIRED.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall revise the Administration Supplement to the Federal Acquisition Regulation to provide uniform guidance and recommend revised requirements for organizational conflicts of interest by contractors in major acquisition programs in order to address the elements identified in subsection (b).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The revised regulations under subsection (a) shall, at a minimum—

(1) address organizational conflicts of interest that could potentially arise as a result of—

(A) lead system integrator contracts on major acquisition programs and contracts that follow lead system integrator contracts on such programs, particularly contracts for production;

(B) the ownership of business units performing systems engineering and technical assistance functions, professional services, or management support services in relation to major acquisition programs by contractors who simultaneously own business units competing to perform as either the prime contractor or the supplier of a major subsystem or component for such programs;

(C) the award of major subsystem contracts by a prime contractor for a major acquisition program to business units or other affiliates of the same parent corporate entity, and particularly the award of subcontracts for software integration or the development of a proprietary software system architecture; or

(D) the performance by, or assistance of, contractors in technical evaluations on major acquisition programs;

(2) require the Administration to request advice on systems architecture and systems engineering matters with respect to major acquisition programs from objective sources independent of the prime contractor;

(3) require that a contract for the performance of systems engineering and technical assistance functions for a major acquisition program contains a provision prohibiting the contractor or any affiliate of the contractor from participating as a prime contractor or a major subcontractor in the development of a system under the program; and

(4) establish such limited exceptions to the requirement in paragraphs (2) and (3) as the Administrator considers necessary to ensure that the Administration has continued access to advice on systems architecture and systems engineering matters from highly qualified contractors with domain experience and expertise, while ensuring that such advice comes from sources that are objective and unbiased.

SEC. 831. PROTECTION OF APOLLO LANDING SITES.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, in consultation with relevant Federal agencies and stakeholders, shall assess the issues relating to protecting and preserving historically important Apollo Program lunar landing sites and Apollo program artifacts residing on the lunar surface, including those pertaining to Apollo 11 and Apollo 17.

(b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the assessment, the Director shall include—

(1) a determination of what risks to the protection and preservation of those sites and artifacts exist or may exist in the future;

(2) a determination of what measures are required to ensure such protection and preservation;

(3) a determination of the extent to which additional domestic legislation or international treaties or agreements will be required; and

(4) specific recommendations for protecting and preserving those lunar landing sites and artifacts.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress the results of the assessment.

SEC. 832. NASA LEASE OF NON-EXCESS PROPERTY.

Section 20145(g) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by striking ''10 years after December 26, 2007'' and inserting ''December 31, 2018''.

SEC. 833. TERMINATION LIABILITY.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the ISS, the Space Launch System, and the Orion will enable the Nation to continue operations in low-Earth orbit and to send its astronauts to deep space;

(2) the James Webb Space Telescope will revolutionize our understanding of star and planet formation and how galaxies evolved, and will advance the search for the origins of our universe;

(3) as a result of their unique capabilities and their critical contribution to the future of space exploration, these systems have been designated by Congress and the Administration as priority investments;

(4) contractors are currently holding program funding, estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, to cover the potential termination liability should the Government choose to terminate a program for convenience;

(5) as a result, hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars are unavailable for meaningful work on these programs;

(6) according to the Government Accountability Office, the Administration procures most of its goods and services through contracts, and it terminates very few of them;

(7) in fiscal year 2010, the Administration terminated 28 of 16,343 active contracts and orders, a termination rate of about 0.17 percent; and

(8) the Administration should vigorously pursue a policy on termination liability that maximizes the utilization of its appropriated funds to make maximum progress in meeting established technical goals and schedule milestones on these high-priority programs.

SEC. 834. INDEPENDENT REVIEWS.

Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing—

(1) the Administration's procedures for conducting independent reviews of projects and programs at lifecycle milestones;

(2) how the Administration ensures the independence of the individuals who conduct those reviews prior to their assignment;

(3) the internal and external entities independent of project and program management that conduct reviews of projects and programs at life cycle milestones; and

(4) how the Administration ensures the independence of such entities and their members.

SEC. 835. NASA ADVISORY COUNCIL.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academy of Public Administration to assess the effectiveness of the NASA Advisory Council and to make recommendations to Congress for any change to—

(1) the functions of the Council;

(2) the appointment of members to the Council;

(3) the qualifications for members of the Council;

(4) the duration of terms of office for members of the Council;

(5) the frequency of meetings of the Council;

(6) the structure of leadership and Committees of the Council; and

(7) the levels of professional staffing for the Council.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In carrying out the assessment under subsection (a), the National Academy of Public Administration shall—

(1) consider the impacts of broadening the Council's role to include providing consultation and advice to Congress under section 20113(g) of title 51, United States Code;

(2) consider the past activities of the Council and the activities of other analogous Federal advisory bodies; and

(3) any other issues that the National Academy of Public Administration determines could potentially impact the effectiveness of the Council.

(c) REPORT.—The National Academy of Public Administration shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress the results of the assessment, including any recommendations.

(d) CONSULTATION AND ADVICE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 20113(g) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''and Congress'' after ''advice to the Administration''.

(2) SUNSET.—Effective September 30, 2017, section 20113(g) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by striking ''and Congress''.

SEC. 836. COST ESTIMATION.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) realistic cost estimating is critically important to the ultimate success of major space development projects; and

(2) the Administration has devoted significant efforts over the past 5 years to improving its cost estimating capabilities, but it is important that the Administration continue its efforts to develop and implement guidance in establishing realistic cost estimates.

(b) GUIDANCE AND CRITERIA.—The Administrator shall provide to its acquisition programs and projects, in a manner consistent with the Administration's Space Flight Program and Project Management Requirements—

(1) guidance on when to use an Independent Cost Estimate and Independent Cost Assessment; and

(2) criteria to use to make a determination under paragraph (1).

SEC. 837. FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Administration must address, mitigate, and reverse, where possible, the deterioration of its facilities and infrastructure, as their condition is hampering the effectiveness and efficiency of research performed by both the Administration and industry participants making use of Administration facilities, thus harming the competitiveness of the United States aerospace industry;

(2) the Administration has a role in providing laboratory capabilities to industry participants that are not economically viable as commercial entities and thus are not available elsewhere;

(3) to ensure continued access to reliable and efficient world-class facilities by researchers, the Administration should establish strategic partnerships with other Federal agencies, State agencies, FAA-licensed spaceports, institutions of higher education, and industry, as appropriate; and

(4) decisions on whether to dispose of, maintain, or modernize existing facilities must be made in the context of meeting Administration and other needs, including those required to meet the activities supporting the human exploration roadmap under section 432 of this Act, considering other national laboratory needs as the Administrator deems appropriate.

(b) POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States that the Administration maintain reliable and efficient facilities and infrastructure and that decisions on whether to dispose of, maintain, or modernize existing facilities or infrastructure be made in the context of meeting future Administration needs.

(c) PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall develop a facilities and infrastructure plan.

(2) GOAL.—The goal of the plan is to position the Administration to have the facilities and infrastructure, including laboratories, tools, and approaches, necessary to meet future Administration and other Federal agencies' laboratory needs.

(3) CONTENTS.—The plan shall identify—

(A) current Administration and other Federal agency laboratory needs;

(B) future Administration research and development and testing needs;

(C) a strategy for identifying facilities and infrastructure that are candidates for disposal, that is consistent with the national strategic direction set forth in—

(i) the National Space Policy;

(ii) the National Aeronautics Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Infrastructure Plan;

(iii) the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–155; 119 Stat. 2895), National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–422; 122 Stat. 4779), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18301 et seq.); and

(iv) the human exploration roadmap under section 432 of this Act;

(D) a strategy for the maintenance, repair, upgrading, and modernization of Administration facilities and infrastructure, including laboratories and equipment;

(E) criteria for—

(i) prioritizing deferred maintenance tasks;

(ii) maintaining, repairing, upgrading, or modernizing Administration facilities and infrastructure; and

(iii) implementing processes, plans, and policies for guiding the Administration's Centers on whether to maintain, repair, upgrade, or modernize a facility or infrastructure and for determining the type of instrument to be used;

(F) an assessment of modifications needed to maximize usage of facilities that offer unique and highly specialized benefits to the aerospace industry and the American public; and

(G) implementation steps, including a timeline, milestones, and an estimate of resources required for carrying out the plan.

(d) REQUIREMENT TO ESTABLISH POLICY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall establish and make publicly available a policy that guides the Administration's use of existing authorities to out-grant, lease, excess to the General Services Administration, sell, decommission, demolish, or otherwise transfer property, facilities, or infrastructure.

(2) CRITERIA.—The policy shall include criteria for the use of authorities, best practices, standardized procedures, and guidelines for how to appropriately manage property, facilities, and infrastructure.

(e) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress the plan developed under subsection (c).

SEC. 838. HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS.

Section 70702 of title 51, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a)(3) to read as follows:

''(3) any other orbital or suborbital space vehicle carrying humans that is—

''(A) owned by the Federal Government; or

''(B) being used pursuant to a contract or Space Act Agreement with the Federal Government for carrying a government astronaut or a researcher funded by the Federal Government; or''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) GOVERNMENT ASTRONAUT.—The term 'government astronaut' has the meaning given the term in section 50902.

''(2) SPACE ACT AGREEMENT.—The term 'Space Act Agreement' means an agreement entered into by the Administration pursuant to its other transactions authority under section 20113(e).''.

SEC. 839. ORBITAL DEBRIS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) orbital debris poses serious risks to the operational space capabilities of the United States;

(2) an international commitment and integrated strategic plan are needed to mitigate the growth of orbital debris wherever possible; and

(3) the delay in the Office of Science and Technology Policy's submission of a report on the status of international coordination and development of orbital debris mitigation strategies is inconsistent with such risks.

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) COORDINATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the status of efforts to coordinate with foreign countries within the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee to mitigate the effects and growth of orbital debris under section 1202(b)(1) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18441(b)(1)).

(2) MITIGATION STRATEGY.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the status of the orbital debris mitigation strategy required under section 1202(b)(2) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18441(b)(2)).

SEC. 840. REVIEW OF ORBITAL DEBRIS REMOVAL CONCEPTS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) orbital debris in low-Earth orbit poses significant risks to spacecraft;

(2) such orbital debris may increase due to collisions between existing debris objects; and

(3) understanding options to address and remove orbital debris is important for ensuring safe and effective spacecraft operations in low-Earth orbit.

(b) REVIEW.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator—

(A) in collaboration with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall solicit and review concepts and options for removing orbital debris from low-Earth orbit; and

(B) shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the solicitation and review under subparagraph (A), including recommendations on the best options for decreasing the risks associated with orbital debris.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The solicitation and review under paragraph (1) shall address the requirements for and feasibility of developing and implementing each of the options.

SEC. 841. SPACE ACT AGREEMENTS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that, when used appropriately, Space Act Agreements can provide significant value in furtherance of NASA's mission.

(b) FUNDED SPACE ACT AGREEMENTS.—To the extent appropriate, the Administrator shall seek to maximize the value of contributions provided by other parties under a funded Space Act Agreement in order to advance NASA's mission.

(c) NON-EXCLUSIVITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, to the greatest extent practicable, issue each Space Act Agreement—

(A) except as provided in paragraph (2), on a nonexclusive basis;

(B) in a manner that ensures all non-government parties have equal access to NASA resources; and

(C) exercising reasonable care not to reveal unique or proprietary information.

(2) EXCLUSIVITY.—If the Administrator determines an exclusive arrangement is necessary, the Administrator shall, to the greatest extent practicable, issue the Space Act Agreement—

(A) utilizing a competitive selection process when exclusive arrangements are necessary; and

(B) pursuant to public announcements when exclusive arrangements are necessary.

(d) TRANSPARENCY.—The Administrator shall publicly disclose on the Administration's website and make available in a searchable format each Space Act Agreement, including an estimate of committed NASA resources and the expected benefits to agency objectives for each agreement, with appropriate redactions for proprietary, sensitive, or classified information, not later than 60 days after such agreement is signed by the parties.

(e) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the use of Space Act Agreement authority by the Administration during the previous fiscal year.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report shall include for each Space Act Agreement in effect at the time of the report—

(A) an indication of whether the agreement is a reimbursable, non-reimbursable, or funded Space Act Agreement;

(B) a description of—

(i) the subject and terms;

(ii) the parties;

(iii) the responsible—

(I) Mission Directorate;

(II) Center; or

(III) headquarters element;

(iv) the value;

(v) the extent of the cost sharing among Federal Government and non-Federal sources;

(vi) the time period or schedule; and

(vii) all milestones; and

(C) an indication of whether the agreement was renewed during the previous fiscal year.

(3) ANTICIPATED AGREEMENTS.—The report shall include a list of all anticipated reimbursable, non-reimbursable, and funded Space Act Agreements for the upcoming fiscal year.

(4) CUMULATIVE PROGRAM BENEFITS.—The report shall include, with respect to each Space Act Agreement covered by the report, a summary of—

(A) the technology areas in which research projects were conducted under that agreement;

(B) the extent to which the use of that agreement—

(i) has contributed to a broadening of the technology and industrial base available for meeting Administration needs; and

(ii) has fostered within the technology and industrial base new relationships and practices that support the United States; and

(C) the total amount of value received by the Federal Government during the fiscal year under that agreement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on S. 442, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017. This bipartisan and bicameral bill grew to maturity through many long and serious discussions about the future of our Nation's space program.

I am encouraged by the bill's persistent emphasis on the continuity of purpose and stability. It is crucial that we continue to support NASA's ongoing human exploration efforts.

I am proud to note the inclusion of the To Research Evaluate, Assess, and Treat Astronauts Act, better known as the TREAT Astronauts Act, which will ensure that our Nation's astronauts receive support for medical issues associated with their service. The language of this bill is exactly the same as the TREAT Astronauts Act that was passed in the House on December 7, 2016.

As a medical professional myself, I care deeply about this issue. I am honored to have sponsored the original legislation, and am proud to contribute to an important program that will support the brave men and women of our astronaut corps. Outer space poses many medical challenges. The human body simply is not designed to thrive in microgravity, or weightlessness. We know that spending time in space is risky. We want to understand the reasons why the TREAT Astronauts Act will ensure the retention of our astronauts' medical data and help to continue our research in aerospace medicine, while also providing our astronauts with the medical care that they need and deserve after risking so much in service to our country.

This bill continues support for the important work on the Space Launch System, the Orion crew vehicle, and commercial cargo and crew programs.

□ 1815

The future of the International Space Station is another key topic addressed in this legislation. We are committed to operating the ISS until 2024. Beyond that date, however, maintaining NASA's current level of support for the ISS will dramatically affect the rest of NASA's portfolio, particularly in human spaceflight.

This bill opens the debate about how and under what circumstances NASA's presence in low-Earth orbit can and should be continued beyond 2024. Balancing NASA's presence and low Earth orbit and beyond low Earth orbit will require thoughtful and informed decisionmaking. My hope is that NASA will explore unique partnerships that will maintain NASA's ability to utilize low Earth orbit in an efficient manner by leveraging private sector investment. This bill will help inform and frame that imminent debate.

This bill also addresses NASA's facilities and infrastructure here on Earth. NASA must develop a plan so that its labs, tools, facilities, and infrastructure can support a robust exploration agenda. Right-sizing NASA's footprint is a longstanding challenge. We must maintain critical capabilities but also find efficiencies where they may exist.

The bill before us would call on NASA to develop a policy to ensure that NASA maintains infrastructure to support bold exploration. If NASA determines that facilities are not necessary or could be transferred to the private sector, the bill calls on NASA to do so in accordance with a transparent and equitable process.

The bill also urges the administration to pursue a sensible policy on termination liability so that NASA makes the best possible use of taxpayer dollars rather than the inefficient policy implemented by the previous administration.

This bill sets out clear intentions for NASA as we move forward into the next chapter of American space exploration. I invite my colleagues to join me in supporting this very important bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 442, the NASA Transition Authorization Act of 2017.

NASA is a catalyst for scientific discovery, innovation, inspiration, and economic growth. This bill helps to ensure that NASA continues to make significant advances in science, aeronautics, human exploration, and space technology.

During the last Congress, the House passed the NASA Authorization Act of 2015, H.R. 810. H.R. 810 was a bipartisan effort and, in particular, it set the long-term goal of sending humans to the surface of Mars and directed NASA to prepare a human exploration roadmap for what is needed to get there.

I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that the Senate-passed bill that is before us today reflects significant content from H.R. 810. Sending humans to deep space destinations and eventually to Mars is a challenge and goal that I know will bring out the best of our U.S. industry and universities, and it will inspire our young people to seek the education and develop the skills needed to help the United States send first astronauts to the martian surface.

Of course, keeping our focus on that goal over multiple Congresses and administrations will really not be easy. That is why this bill, S. 442, comes at a critical time. Witnesses at a recent hearing of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology emphasized the need for stability for NASA if it is to carry out the challenging tasks that our Nation has given it.

While S. 442 is a 1-year reauthorization, it enables NASA to continue making effective progress on its programs, including on the key systems that will enable us to send NASA astronauts beyond low Earth orbit and on to Mars.

The bill also provides policy direction in a number of important areas, including astronaut health care, human spaceflight safety, protection of Apollo lunar landing sites, orbital debris mitigation, and facilities and infrastructure planning.

Mr. Speaker, while I support S. 442, it is not a perfect bill. It does not directly address all of NASA's science programs, namely, earth science and heliophysics. Those programs provide the space-based measurements to help scientists understand the Earth's systems and changing climate to predict space weather events, which can have devastating impacts on our terrestrial infrastructure. At the same time, I believe that section 501 of the bill reaffirms the importance of maintaining a balance and adequately funded science program, which includes astrophysics, planetary science, earth science, and heliophysics.

In addition, while the bill reflects the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies' top-line mark of $19.5 billion for NASA for fiscal year 2017, I am disappointed that it authorizes lower levels than the proposals of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for NASA's science, aeronautics, and space technology accounts. We should be investing more, not less, in these important R&D areas.

Mr. Speaker, we need a strong NASA, and we need to provide it with a sustained commitment of vision, resources, and support to carry out the challenging tasks our Nation has given it.

Before I close, I want to recognize the efforts of committee leadership, including Chairman LAMAR SMITH, Space Subcommittee Chairman BRIAN BABIN, and the former Subcommittee Ranking Member Donna Edwards for their work on H.R. 810, a significant portion of which is included in this Senate bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on this Senate bill, the NASA Transition Authorization Act of 2017, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the full committee.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Space for yielding me time.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017 provides bipartisan and bicameral guidance for NASA as we usher in a new era of space exploration.

I support this bill and the direction it establishes for America's space program. S. 442, which passed the Senate by unanimous consent on February 17, includes almost all of the policy provisions from the House authorization bills that passed the House in the last Congress with broad bipartisan support. In fact, it authorizes the House's proposed fiscal year 2017 funding level of $19.5 billion.

This bill provides a balanced NASA portfolio across all of the mission directorates. It maintains congressional direction for priority near-term programs, such as the James Webb Space Telescope, the Space Launch System, the Orion crew vehicle, the International Space Station, and the Commercial Crew and Cargo Programs.

NASA's exploration projects are vulnerable to changes in the political landscape. We must have a flexible space program, but not one that is knocked off course. Successfully combining flexibility with constancy of purpose requires thoughtful planning.

This bill directs NASA to create a roadmap for human exploration. An exploration roadmap will help NASA inform Congress and the President, as well as direct the future path and tempo of exploration for decades to come.

This legislation also looks to the future of scientific exploration. It provides support for NASA's Mars 2020 rover, the Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope, and a mission to Europa, Jupiter's icy moon that possibly harbors the building blocks of life. It establishes that one of NASA's fundamental objectives is ''the search for life's origin, evolution, distribution, and future in the universe.''

Toward that end, this legislation directs the NASA Administrator to develop both an exoplanet exploration strategy and an astrobiology strategy within 18 months after the bill is signed into law. It also directs the NASA Administrator to report on how the Administration can expand collaborative partnerships for these scientific endeavors.

Just 2 weeks ago, NASA announced that it had confirmed the existence of

seven planets around a nearby star, three of which are in the ''habitable zone.'' This bill builds upon these awe-inspiring discoveries and will help ''unlock the mysteries of space,'' as President Trump said in his inaugural address.

Part of achieving success in space exploration is making sure that NASA is not burdened with funding other agency missions. For example, there are 17 agencies with responsibility for studying climate change, but only 1 agency, NASA, is responsible for space exploration. This bill directs the NASA Administrator to seek reimbursement whenever responsibilities are transferred to NASA from another agency or when NASA funds another agency's activities.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleague and Texas friend Dr. BRIAN BABIN, the chairman of the Space Subcommittee, for his work on the TREAT Astronauts Act, which is included in this authorization. Chairman BABIN's legislation gives NASA the ability to care for our astronauts and enhance our understanding of the effects of spaceflight on the human body.

I would also like to thank the Science, Space, and Technology Committee staff for their years of effort on this bill, especially the Space Subcommittee director, Tom Hammond, who has worked diligently to ensure that this bill became a reality. I also recognize the minority staff who were essential to the process as well.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California, (Mr. BERA), the current ranking member of the Space Subcommittee.

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member and the chairman for this bill.

This bicameral and bipartisan bill that we are considering today, the NASA Transition Authorization Act of 2017, authorizes NASA's appropriations for the fiscal year 2017.

If enacted, the bill's provisions will provide important stability and funding and consistent vision that we need for NASA to succeed as they continue to make progress across disciplines of space and earth science, in human exploration and spaceflight, innovative technologies, biomedical research, and in aeronautics.

Mr. Speaker, NASA truly is a symbol of American excellence and ingenuity. For NASA to continue doing the great things that it does, including preparation for flying SLS and Orion, launching the James Webb Space Telescope, and landing humans on Mars, it is critical that S. 442 be enacted.

And while I would have preferred a more comprehensive outlook of NASA's science discipline—namely, in earth science, planetary science, astrophysics, and heliophysics—I am pleased the bill provides the consistent policy direction our Nation's space and aeronautics programs require and deserve. Notably, the bill sets the long-term course of sending humans to the surface of Mars and directs NASA to provide a human exploration roadmap outlining the capabilities and milestones needed to achieve the goal.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, NASA's space and aeronautics programs help maintain our competitiveness, stimulate innovation and economic growth, and inspire the next generation to dream big and garner the skills to turn those dreams into action.

NASA and our space program have a long history of bipartisan support. I urge Members of the House to pass S. 442, the NASA Transition Authorization Act of 2017.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, and I hope I don't take 5 minutes.

I rise today in support of S. 442, the NASA Transition Authorization Act of 2017.

I have long been a supporter of our Nation's space program. I have seen what we can accomplish when we put our best and brightest in a room together and give them the resources they need to solve tough scientific, engineering, and mathematical problems to better our society and our understanding of the solar system and beyond.

The bill before us today ensures the hardworking people at NASA and the thousands of private aerospace workers in Colorado and across the country have a constant sea of purpose and the backing of Congress to continue advancing our quest to understand our planet and explore other celestial bodies.

Mr. Speaker, I enjoy serving on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. While we may not agree on every issue, when it comes to our space programs, we come together and find the best solutions to the problems we face, and this bill does exactly that.

□ 1830

As my colleagues on this committee know, I am very passionate about getting our astronauts to the surface of Mars. This bill will require detailed plans from NASA on how to do that and, more importantly, on the timelines so that we can get to Mars through the development of a human exploration roadmap.

In addition to this roadmap, section 435 of the bill also requires NASA to report back on the feasibility of a human mission to Mars by the year 2033. Sixteen years from now, Earth and Mars will be aligned for what could be the most significant and inspirational journey in history.

About 18 months ago, our committee heard testimony from former NASA leadership about our deep space exploration missions. I asked them to provide us a date: When can we get to Mars? As it turns out, the planets' orbit and alignment in 2033 is optimal. So as my colleagues on the committee know, I have prepared a bumper sticker, Mr. Speaker, just for you, showing 2033 as the time we are going to get our astronauts to Mars.

I thank Chairman SMITH, Representative BABIN, Representative EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, as well as Representative BERA for allowing me to work and to help put section 435 into the bill.

I know we can do this. This is a mission that all Americans will be proud of. They are so proud of our space program, the scientists and engineers at NASA. This will give us a real goal and a real project to get our astronauts to Mars by 2033.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time on the bill.

I ask my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

I thank all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their work: our chairman, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH); and also the ranking gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON); my counterpart on the subcommittee, Representative BERA; and also Representative PERLMUTTER, the gentleman from Colorado; and all of my fellow members on the subcommittee and our entire committee.

I take a moment to also thank our hardworking staff, and that includes Tom Hammond, Mike Mineiro, Jonathan Charlton, Ryan Faith, Molly Fromm, and Chris Wydler from the majority staff. I also thank Steve Janushkowsky, Jeannie Kranz, Stuart Burns from my congressional staff, and Allen Li and Pamela Whitney from the minority staff.

Mr. Speaker, it is because of their countless hours of hard work, negotiation, and finding common ground that we will now send this bill from the floor of this House of Representatives to the resolute desk of the Oval Office to be signed into law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 442.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1301, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

Ms. CHENEY, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–26) on the resolution (H. Res. 174) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1301) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 725, INNOCENT PARTY PROTECTION ACT

Ms. CHENEY, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–27) on the resolution (H. Res. 175) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 725) to amend title 28, United States Code, to prevent fraudulent joinder, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 7, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 7, 2017, at 4:48 p.m.:

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H.J. Res. 44.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 1362, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 375, de novo.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The second electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

FALEOMAVAEGA ENI FA'AUA'A HUNKIN VA CLINIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1362) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from America Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 411, nays 2, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 127]

YEAS—411

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—2

Massie
Sanford

NOT VOTING—16

Blumenauer
Cleaver
Culberson
Gutiérrez
Hill
Himes
Jenkins (KS)
Loudermilk
Nolan
Rohrabacher
Rush
Smith (NE)
Speier
Tipton
Titus
Valadao

□ 1856

Mr. GROTHMAN changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER RESOLUTION RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause (2)(a)(1) of rule IX, I rise to give notice of my intent to raise a question of the privileges of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the form of the resolution appear in the RECORD at this point.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The form of the resolution is as follows:

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

Whereas, in the United States' system of checks and balances, Congress has a responsibility to hold the Executive Branch of government to the highest standard of transparency to ensure the public interest is placed first;

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

Whereas, tax returns provide an important baseline disclosure because they contain highly instructive information including whether the candidate paid taxes, what they own, what they have borrowed and from whom, whether they have made any charitable donations, and whether they have taken advantage of tax loopholes;

Whereas, disclosure of the President's tax returns could help those investigating Russian influence in the 2016 election understand the President's financial ties to the Russian Federation and Russian citizens, including debts owed and whether he shares any partnership interests, equity interests, joint ventures or licensing agreements with Russia or Russians;

Whereas, the New York Times has reported that President Trump's close senior advisers, including Carter Page, Paul Manafort, Roger Stone, and General Michael Flynn, have been under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their ties to the Russian Federation;

Whereas, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told *Interfax*, a Russian media outlet, on November 10, 2016 that ''there were contacts'' with Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, and it has been reported that members of President Trump's inner circle were in contact with senior Russian officials throughout the 2016 campaign;

Whereas, according to his 2016 candidate filing with the Federal Election Commission, the President has 564 financial positions in companies located in the United States and around the world;

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

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

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

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

Whereas, according to Reuters, the Trump International Hotel could receive up to $60,000 from the Kuwaiti government for a party it held at the Hotel on February 22, 2017.

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

Whereas, the most signed petition on the White House website calls for the release of the President's tax return information to verify compliance with the Emoluments Clause, with 1 million, 78 thousand signatures as of the date of this resolution;

Whereas, the Chairmen of the Ways and Means Committee, Joint Committee on Taxation, and Senate Finance Committee have the authority to request the President's tax returns under Section 6103 of the tax code;

Whereas, the Joint Committee on Taxation reviewed the tax returns of President Richard Nixon in 1974 and made the information public;

Whereas, the Ways and Means Committee used IRC 6103 authority in 2014 to make public the confidential tax information of 51 taxpayers;

Whereas, the American people have the right to know whether or not their President is operating under conflicts of interest related to international affairs, tax reform, government contracts, or otherwise: Now, therefore, be it:

Resolved. That the House of Representatives shall—

1. Immediately request the tax return information of Donald J. Trump for tax years 2006 through 2015 for review in closed executive session by the Committee on Ways and Means, as provided under Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, and vote to report the information therein to the full House of Representatives.

2. Support transparency in government and the longstanding tradition of Presidents and Presidential candidates disclosing their tax returns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will now recognize the gentlewoman from California to offer the resolution just noticed. Does the gentlewoman offer the resolution?

Ms. ESHOO. I do, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Clerk read as follows:

RESOLUTION

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

Whereas, in the United States' system of checks and balances, Congress has a responsibility to hold the Executive Branch of government to the highest standard of transparency to ensure the public interest is placed first;

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

Whereas, tax returns provide an important baseline disclosure because they contain highly instructive information including whether the candidate paid taxes, what they own, what they have borrowed and from whom, whether they have made any charitable donations, and whether they have taken advantage of tax loopholes;

Whereas, disclosure of the President's tax returns could help those investigating Russian influence in the 2016 election understand the President's financial ties to the Russian Federation and Russian citizens, including debts owed and whether he shares any partnership interests, equity interests, joint ventures or licensing agreements with Russia or Russians;

Whereas, the New York Times has reported that President Trump's close senior advisers, including Carter Page, Paul Manafort, Roger Stone, and General Michael Flynn, have been under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their ties to the Russian Federation;

Whereas, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told *Interfax*, a Russian media outlet, on November 10, 2016 that ''there were contacts'' with Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, and it has been reported that members of President Trump's inner circle were in contact with senior Russian officials throughout the 2016 campaign;

Whereas, according to his 2016 candidate filing with the Federal Election Commission, the President has 564 financial positions in companies located in the United States and around the world;

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

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

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

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

Whereas, according to Reuters, the Trump International Hotel could receive up to $60,000 from the Kuwaiti government for a party it held at the Hotel on February 22, 2017.

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

Whereas, the most signed petition on the White House website calls for the release of the President's tax return information to verify compliance with the Emoluments Clause, with 1 million, 78 thousand signatures as of the date of this resolution;

Whereas, the Chairmen of the Ways and Means Committee, Joint Committee on Taxation, and Senate Finance Committee have the authority to request the President's tax returns under Section 6103 of the tax code;

Whereas, the Joint Committee on Taxation reviewed the tax returns of President Richard Nixon in 1974 and made the information public;

Whereas, the Ways and Means Committee used IRC 6103 authority in 2014 to make public the confidential tax information of 51 taxpayers;

Whereas, the American people have the right to know whether or not their President is operating under conflicts of interest related to international affairs, tax reform, government contracts, or otherwise: Now, therefore, be it:

Resolved, That the House of Representatives shall—

1. Immediately request the tax return information of Donald J. Trump for tax years 2006 through 2015 for review in closed executive session by the Committee on Ways and Means, as provided under Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, and vote to report

the information therein to the full House of Representatives

2. Support transparency in government and the longstanding tradition of Presidents and Presidential candidates disclosing their tax returns.

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

Ms. ESHOO. I do, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California is recognized.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, under clause 1 of rule IX, questions of the privilege of the House are ''those affecting the rights of the House collectively, its safety, dignity, and the integrity of its proceedings.''

I believe the dignity and the integrity of the House are put at risk when this body refuses to exercise its statutory authority and constitutional obligation to operate as a check on the executive branch.

Under section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, three congressional committees have jurisdiction to request tax returns: House Ways and Means, Senate Finance, and the Joint Committee on Taxation.

This authority was placed in the Tax Code by Congress in 1924 to allow for full investigations of several scandals in the Harding administration, including the Teapot Dome bribery scandal. Section 6103 was the subject of considerable debate in this Chamber, but, ultimately, Congress passed it in order to provide an important investigatory check on the executive branch.

In 1974, section 6103 authority was used by the members of the Joint Committee on Taxation to publish a staff report on President Nixon's tax returns revealing that he owed nearly a half a million dollars in back taxes. Today, I worry that we are rapidly approaching a scandal of a similar magnitude to these previous events.

Since we voted on a similar resolution last week, the Attorney General and other senior administration officials have admitted that they met with Russian officials during the campaign and the transition period. This comes after the campaign and unequivocally last year saying that there was ''no communications between the campaign and any foreign entity during the campaign.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman will suspend.

The gentlewoman is reminded that she must confine her remarks to the parliamentary question of whether the resolution qualifies under rule IX.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I understand, and I am working to establish that case.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman will confine her remarks to that question or the Chair will be prepared to rule.

Ms. ESHOO. Further reports about the President's potential conflicts of interest suggest that the House should exercise its oversight authority immediately, including massive foreign payments to the President's hotels and prior business deals with foreign oligarchs around the world. The only way to determine whether these dealings represent——

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman will suspend.

Does the gentlewoman wish to present an argument as to whether the resolution qualifies under rule IX?

The Chair has been patient. The gentlewoman must confine her remarks to make that argument. If not, the Chair is prepared to rule.

The gentlewoman from California is recognized.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I am attempting to set forward the question of the privileges of the House on a privileged resolution, and this is a part of it.

I believe the only way to determine whether these dealings represent violations of the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution is by fully examining the President's tax records.

Contrary to the Chair's ruling last Monday, there is no direct precedent in section 706 of the House Practice manual for the situation because the current situation is unprecedented. The President's business empire makes him more susceptible to conflicts of interest than any President in our history.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman is no longer recognized.

The Chair is prepared to rule on the question.

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

As the Chair ruled on February 27, 2017, and as demonstrated by section 706 of the House Rules and Manual, a resolution directing a committee to meet and conduct certain business does not qualify as a question of the privileges of the House.

The resolution offered by the gentlewoman from California directs the Committee on Ways and Means to meet and consider an item of business under the procedures set forth in 26 U.S. Code 6103. Accordingly, the resolution does not qualify as a question of the privileges of the House.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the Chair.

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

MOTION TO TABLE

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

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

The Clerk read as follows:

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

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on tabling the appeal will be followed by a 5-minute vote on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 375, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 227, noes 186, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 128]

AYES—227

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Newhouse
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Trott
Turner
Upton
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—186

Adams	Gabbard	Neal
Aguilar	Gallego	Nolan
Barragán	Garamendi	Norcross
Bass	Gonzalez (TX)	O'Halleran
Beatty	Gottheimer	O'Rourke
Bera	Green, Al	Pallone
Beyer	Green, Gene	Panetta
Bishop (GA)	Grijalva	Pascrell
Blunt Rochester	Hanabusa	Payne
Bonamici	Hastings	Pelosi
Boyle, Brendan F.	Heck	Perlmutter
	Higgins (NY)	Peters
Brady (PA)	Hoyer	Peterson
Brown (MD)	Huffman	Pingree
Brownley (CA)	Jackson Lee	Pocan
Bustos	Jayapal	Polis
Butterfield	Jeffries	Price (NC)
Capuano	Johnson (GA)	Quigley
Carbajal	Johnson, E. B.	Raskin
Cárdenas	Jones	Rice (NY)
Carson (IN)	Kaptur	Richmond
Cartwright	Keating	Rosen
Castor (FL)	Kelly (IL)	Roybal-Allard
Castro (TX)	Kennedy	Ruiz
Chu, Judy	Khanna	Ruppersberger
Cicilline	Kihuen	Ryan (OH)
Clark (MA)	Kildee	Sánchez
Clarke (NY)	Kilmer	Sarbanes
Clay	Kind	Schakowsky
Clyburn	Krishnamoorthi	Schiff
Cohen	Kuster (NH)	Schneider
Connolly	Langevin	Schrader
Conyers	Larsen (WA)	Scott (VA)
Cooper	Larson (CT)	Scott, David
Correa	Lawrence	Serrano
Costa	Lawson (FL)	Sewell (AL)
Courtney	Lee	Shea-Porter
Crist	Levin	Sherman
Crowley	Lewis (GA)	Sires
Cuellar	Lieu, Ted	Slaughter
Cummings	Lipinski	Smith (WA)
Davis (CA)	Loebsack	Soto
Davis, Danny	Lofgren	Suozzi
DeFazio	Lowenthal	Swalwell (CA)
DeGette	Lowey	Takano
Delaney	Lujan Grisham, M.	Thompson (CA)
DeLauro		Thompson (MS)
DelBene	Luján, Ben Ray	Tonko
Demings	Lynch	Torres
DeSaulnier	Maloney, Carolyn B.	Tsongas
Deutch		Vargas
Dingell	Maloney, Sean	Veasey
Doggett	Matsui	Vela
Doyle, Michael F.	McCollum	Velázquez
	McEachin	Visclosky
Ellison	McGovern	Walz
Engel	McNerney	Wasserman Schultz
Eshoo	Meeks	
Espaillat	Meng	Waters, Maxine
Esty	Moore	Watson Coleman
Evans	Moulton	Welch
Foster	Murphy (FL)	Wilson (FL)
Frankel (FL)	Nadler	Yarmuth
Fudge	Napolitano	

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Sanford

NOT VOTING—15

Blumenauer	Hill	Smith (NE)
Cleaver	Himes	Speier
Culberson	Jenkins (KS)	Tipton
Garrett	Rohrabacher	Titus
Gutiérrez	Rush	Valadao

□ 1929

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Messrs. ROKITA and LAHOOD changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the motion to table was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FRED D. THOMPSON FEDERAL BUILDING AND UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 375) to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the ''Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR ANTHONY ''TONY'' BEILENSON

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I regret to inform the House that my predecessor, Anthony ''Tony'' C. Beilenson, died over the weekend.

Anthony Beilenson was known for integrity, civility, intelligence, courage, and a willingness to work across the aisle, even when that caused him to differ from the orthodoxy of his own party.

He served in this House for 20 years, from 1977 through 1997, and served for 2 years as chair of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He passed on Sunday, and I ask that Members rise and that the House observe a moment of silence.

PUBLIC TIRED OF BIASED MEDIA

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, from Investor's Business Daily: ''The mainstream media's open hostility to President Trump may be starting to backfire, according to the latest IBD/TIPP poll. The poll found that 55 percent of the public says they have grown 'weary from the media's persistently negative coverage of President Trump.' A roughly equal share, 54 percent, also believe that the news media 'has assumed the role of the opposition party, constantly opposing the president and his policies at every turn.'''

''The results are understandable, given the unusually hostile relationship the press has with Trump.

''A study by the nonpartisan group Media Tenor found that only 3 percent of network news stories in the first month of the Trump administration could be described as positive.''

''The poll found that 57 percent back Trump's plan to hire 10,000 more immigration agents; 58 percent support the deportation of illegal immigrants charged with a crime, even if they haven't been convicted; and 53 percent back Trump's call to withhold federal aid to 'sanctuary cities.'''

''Meanwhile, 42 percent say Trump is providing strong leadership for the country, which is higher than the 40 percent Obama got last October.''

HOUSE REPUBLICANS' BILL TO REPEAL THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, it took 7 years, but it is finally here: the House Republican plan to make America sick again.

Under this plan, millions of Americans will lose their health insurance, and millions of other families will pay more for worse coverage. At the same time, the Republicans' bill rolls back Medicaid expansion and allows insurers to charge older enrollees more.

We always knew that the House Republican plan would harm the most vulnerable Americans, but we still do not know how much this bill will cost and how many Americans it will cover.

Now, House Republicans prefer it this way. They know that their bill will cover far fewer people than the Affordable Care Act does. They want to hide this fact from the American people and rush this bill through committee.

Mr. Speaker, this is an obvious and embarrassing display of cowardice from the House Republicans. The American people deserve to know the consequences of this bill just as they deserve quality and affordable access to health care. With the Republican plan, it looks like the American people will get neither.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, LILLIAN COX

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I work for the Texans in Meadows Place. They are led by Mayor Charles Jessup. The locals call Meadows Place the best square mile of small-town America.

Meadows Place has a secret. Shhhhh. Every man who lives there is in love with the same woman. We all love Lillian Cox.

Lillian turned 110 on February 22. In 352 days, I am taking Lillian out for her 111th birthday. She will put on a nice dress, a necklace, and earrings. I will take her to the Live Oak Grill, where she will have the fried catfish she loves so much. I will have the chicken fried steak. And we may go dancing, if I can keep up with her.

Lillian, happy 110th birthday. I will pick you up at 5 p.m. on February 22, 2018.

THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be an adherent of the Constitution, as I know that my colleagues are. We believe in the separation of the three branches of government.

That is why it was so noteworthy and so outrageous that the leader of the free world and Commander in Chief issued a patently irrational email or Twitter on Saturday morning this past Saturday regarding a personal and direct attack on the past President of the United States of America regarding that President having wiretapped this individual in an outrageous manner.

Let me cite for you headlines in the Houston Chronicle: FBI chief seeks Trump rebuke of that horrible statement.

I ask the Department of Justice to immediately respond to Director Comey's request that you rebuke this outrageous statement that would accuse the President of any wiretapping that require either a Title III court, DEA, FBI, or require a FISA court.

Mr. President, explain yourself.

Justice Department, respond to this untruth now.

The Constitution requires it, and the separation of the three branches of government, out of respect, requires it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members to direct their remarks to the Chair.

CONGRATULATING SPECIALIST SUSAN TANUI

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

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to recognize and congratulate Specialist Susan Tanui, the 2016 Army Soldier-Athlete of the Year.

Specialist Tanui currently serves the soldiers at Fort Riley, Kansas, as a dental assistant.

During her time in service, she has exemplified the Army's seven core values—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage—through her dedicated service, which is exemplified by her numerous decorations and awards.

In addition to serving the U.S. Army, Specialist Tanui is currently pursuing a degree at Liberty University, represents the Fort Riley Division running team, the All Army team, and the U.S. Armed Forces as an Army athlete.

She has also represented the U.S. Army in the U.S. Track and Field National Cross Country Championships in 2015 and 2016 and hopes, one day, to compete in the Olympics.

I commend Specialist Tanui's accomplishments, her outstanding character, and look forward to witnessing what she will do in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, we are so proud of Specialist Tanui, the soldiers of Fort Riley, the home of the Big Red One.

HONORING DR. NEHEMIAH DAVIS

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life of a dedicated civil rights leader and pastor, Dr. Nehemiah Davis.

Pastor Davis faithfully served the Mount Pisgah Baptist Church on Evans Avenue in Fort Worth, Texas, on the south side, for over 50 years. Along with serving as a spiritual leader in my hometown, Mr. Davis served as the president of the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America, where he supported churches nationwide.

Pastor Davis' dedication to the community eventually led to his induction into the Religious Hall of Fame and the recognition by the Boy Scouts of America with a Distinguished Service Award.

Dr. Davis not only believed in nurturing spiritual growth, but fought for the equality of all Americans. He fought fearlessly on behalf of the African-American community and led the local NAACP chapter for over 20 years.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Dr. Nehemiah Davis' life of service.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S FAMILY BUSINESS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, President Trump is a master at diverting attention, even the media's. His diversions are a perfect foil from the constitutional questions that his and his family's behavior have raised since he took the oath of office.

With hotels and property developments all over America and the world, the Trump empire is dramatically expanding its domestic business, raising vital questions as to the Trumps' profiting from public service, including from foreign entanglements that violate the Constitution.

Outlined in Article II of the Constitution, the clause prohibits the President from receiving, other than his salary, any compensation, gift, or other form of profit from the United States, a State government, or their instrumentalities.

Congress reserves its ability to consent to foreign emoluments but not to domestic emoluments. Our Founding Fathers were clear—no exceptions.

It has been heavily reported in the papers that the Trump sons have now signed at least 17 new letters of intent with potential developers, even listing specific cities. They don't have to tell their father about all this. The newspapers cover it in abundance. And the American people should never have to wonder whose interests the President serves.

Today those doubts abound. America, the scales of justice need tending.

[From The Washington Post, Mar. 4, 2017]

TRUMP SONS, PLANNING EXPANSION OF FAMILY BUSINESS, LOOK TO LEVERAGE CAMPAIGN EXPERIENCE

(By Jonathan O'Connell, David A. Fahrenthold and Matea Gold)

NEW YORK.—Donald Trump's adult sons, who are overseeing a nationwide expansion of the family business during their father's presidency, are envisioning ways that their experiences from the campaign trail can help them establish a footing in dozens of new markets.

The idea is to move beyond a focus on luxury hotels in big metropolises and build boutique properties in a broader mix of cities, including some the Trump brothers came to know well during more than a year of intensive travel, fundraising and grass-roots networking on the road to The White House.

''I got to see a lot of those markets on the campaign,'' Donald Trump Jr., the president's eldest son, told The Washington Post in a recent interview from his office on the 25th floor of Trump Tower. ''I think I've probably been in all of them over the last 18 months.''

The initial plan is tied to the Trumps' previously announced new chain, Scion, which is being designed as a less-corporate feeling brand of high-end hotels with a more affordable per-room price point than the Trumps' five-star properties.

As with many existing Trump-branded property deals, the developers would own the hotels while the Trumps would be paid licensing and management fees.

The company says it has signed at least 17 letters of intent with potential developers. It is targeting an array of cities such as Austin, Dallas, St. Louis, Nashville and Seattle—and Trump Jr. said the campaign proved useful in forging relationships with potential new connections.

''I met people along the way that would be awesome partners,'' he said.

The expansion plan illustrates how President Trump's political rise has the potential to affect his business even as he and his sons promise to adhere to a strict ethical boundary between the company's moves and the Trump administration. And it shows the inherent challenge in separating the family's political work from its corporate interests, with upsides and potential problems.

Extending the Trump business into a greater cluster of American cities could bring political benefits for a president who has vowed to bring jobs and economic prosperity to struggling communities. But it also comes as Trump has faced criticism from Democrats and ethics officials for his decision to retain his ownership stake in the company, a decision that means he stands to personally benefit from its growth.

Building new hotels, for example, could create issues—tax disputes, allegations of labor violations or environmental violations—that require federal departments to consider cases that could directly impact the president's finances. And while the Trumps have vowed to sign no new foreign deals, pursuing a raft of new domestic contracts from coast to coast means the Trumps are likely to engage in negotiations with private developers, banks and investors who see additional benefits in doing business with the president's company.

''It's just going to add fuel to the fire that is already burning . . . with him having still a foot in both the boardroom and one in the Oval Office,'' said Scott Amey, the general counsel of the nonpartisan watchdog group Project on Government Oversight.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment. The president in January added a team of ethics lawyers to the White

House Counsel's Office, while the company hired a longtime Republican attorney tasked with ensuring the Trump Organization minimizes conflicts of interest.

In interviews, the Trump sons waved off the idea that their plans created any potential ethical problems.

''There are lines that we would never cross, and that's mixing business with anything government,'' Eric Trump said.

Donald Trump Jr. said that since the inauguration, he has spoken with his father twice on the phone and once in person—when he and his brother attended the announcement of their father's Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch. Eric Trump said he may ask his father how things are in the White House but would never discuss government or business affairs.

''Will we ever talk about tax policy? Will I ever ask for anything that could otherwise benefit the business? Absolutely, emphatically not,'' Eric Trump said. ''He has no need to know what we're doing, and I certainly don't need to know what they're doing, and I don't want to.''

The Trumps' point man on the expansion is Eric Danziger, an experienced executive who was hired in 2015 after previously overseeing expansions at Carlson Hotels Worldwide, Starwood Hotels and the former Wyndham International.

One of the first Scion projects is slated to open in Dallas, where a Turkish-born developer aims to open a sleek glass six-story hotel as part of a $50 million mixed-use downtown development. The Austin, Cincinnati, Denver, Detroit, Nashville, Seattle and St. Louis areas are also possible targets, according to reports by Bloomberg News and business trade publications.

The Trumps declined to say what other cities they were exploring for projects but said they were actively seeking contracts in many places. Danziger, speaking last month to Skift, an industry publication, called Scion a ''four-star lifestyle brand'' with wide geographic appeal.

''That kind of brand can be in every city—tertiary, secondary,'' he said. ''So, how many is that? The opportunity is for hundreds.''

Because of the prohibition on foreign deals, Danziger said the company is ''going to have full focus—instead of some focus—on growth domestically of both Trump and Scion.''

The expansion will not be easy, according to analysts. The Trumps will be entering a crowded marketplace of new hotel lines from Marriott, Hilton and Hyatt designed to appeal to a broad cross-section of customers, said Michael J. Bellisario, a senior research analyst with the firm Robert W. Baird & Co.

''There are so many more competitors out there today,'' Bellisario said.

For the Trumps to distinguish their projects from their competitors, they will need to be choosy about locations, Bellisario said. ''You've got to be on the right street comer in the right market. You can't open these hotels in Topeka, Kansas,'' he said. ''So when you think about that, how big can the new line get?''

The plan is a big test for the younger Trumps.

Just as Donald Trump stepped out from his father's shadow in the 1970s to build the family real estate business into today's worldwide collection of golf courses, hotels, condo towers, branded merchandise and other commercial holdings, now Donald Trump Jr., 39, and Eric Trump, 33, have a chance to make their mark.

Along with their sister, Ivanka, who departed the company when their father entered office, the brothers have long served as executive vice presidents.

Before their father ran for president, the three siblings helped expand the firm from focusing on New York to including the management of luxury hotels in top U.S. cities and seven countries, plus more than a dozen golf courses.

The fruits of that work are still coming, as last month the company opened a new golf club in Dubai and, last week held a grand opening for a new hotel-condominium tower in Vancouver, B.C.

A major transition for the sons is taking over a company in which the force behind every Trump company offering—whether it was selling hotel rooms, office buildings, golf outings, ties or raw steaks—was Donald Trump himself.

In interviews, Trump Jr. and Eric Trump said they consider themselves protectors of the Trump brand, an effort they said is sometimes misunderstood. Critics viewed the announcement of Scion during the campaign as a move away from the Trump name. The family's intent was the opposite; since they view the name Trump has a standard for luxury that ought to be insulated, they will use other brands for less pricey products.

''We would never want to dilute the real estate brand by going into tertiary markets that can't sustain the [luxury] properties as we build them,'' Eric Trump said, ''A lot of hotel companies have gotten this wrong.''

Both sons worked for their father starting at young ages, doing landscaping and other labor on his projects.

A University of Pennsylvania graduate, Trump Jr.'s first assignment at the company was to work with executives at New York City real estate projects.

Eric Trump joined after graduating from Georgetown in 2006. He has overseen the Trump Winery near Charlottesville and worked on the Trump hotel in Las Vegas, where he developed a reputation as a hands-on executive.

''If there's a property tax issue or any litigation, he flies into Las Vegas and takes care of it,'' said Phil Ruffin, a casino mogul who is the Trumps' partner in the Las Vegas project. ''He hires the lawyer. If there are any capital improvements, he approves them. He is very energetic like his father—he will just work night and day.''

With their father in charge, there was an informal division of labor among his three eldest children, governing which projects each swooped in to help.

Ivanka Trump created her own brands of shoes, jewelry, handbags and coats. She took the lead on some of the Trump Organization's mast prominent recent projects, such as the $212 million D.C. hotel, which had its soft opening in September.

''I'm probably the most obviously like [Trump Sr.],'' Ivanka Trump said in a 2011 company video titled ''Trump: The Next Generation.''

''In certain ways,'' she added, ''Eric is very similar to him in terms of his love of construction and building. And Don has his sense of humor.''

The Trumps' planned corporate expansion comes as the president has faced intense criticism from Democrats and ethics experts for his continued ownership interest.

A liberal watchdog organization, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), has sued Trump, arguing that his hotel operations violate a constitutional provision barring the president from accepting gifts or payments from a foreign government. Some Democrats have argued that Trump's international trademarks, including one long-sought registration granted in February by China, also violate the Constitution's emoluments clause.

Trump has called the CREW lawsuit ''totally without merit.''

Amey, of the Project on Government Oversight, said there were ways for the Trumps to avoid potential domestic conflicts related to the hotel expansion. He said they could put the hotel business under another corporate structure, which does not involve a trust directly owned by the president himself.

''There are solutions to solving this, [hut] there doesn't seem to be a will and a desire to do that within the White House,'' Amey said.

The Trump brothers say they are taking ethics concerns seriously and are doing everything necessary to avoid distracting from their father's work as president.

''Have I used him as a sounding board in the past? One hundred percent,'' Trump Jr. said. ''Have I learned a lot from him? Couldn't have had a better mentor. But he's got real stuff he's got to deal with. These are real people's lives . . . . So this notion that he is still running the business from the White House is just insane.''

Trump Jr. scoffed at the idea that his father might have somehow viewed running for president—spending millions of dollars of his own money to run against more than a dozen Republican challengers and Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton when few pundits gave him a chance to win—as a money-making endeavor.

''That's not a get-rich-quick scheme,'' he said. ''That doesn't make any sense whatsoever.''

FLOOR SPEECH ON ANTI-SEMITISM

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

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against the rising wave of desecration, threats, and harassment targeting Jewish cemeteries, Jewish community centers, and religious institutions in northern New Jersey and across our country.

JCCs and synagogues are bedrocks of religious and civic life for Jewish communities, housing preschools for children and a range of religious, educational, and social programs for families and seniors. Yet the safety and well-being of these communal spaces are the scope of extremism and anti-Semitism.

Recently, there have been eight bomb threats targeting six Jewish community centers in New Jersey and more than 100 across our country. Parents are pulling their children from religious schools. Others are afraid to attend religious services. It is unacceptable.

In the last 24 hours alone, officials in my district have uncovered multiple swastikas defacing our public spaces. These are not cases of random hatred. They are part of a deeply disturbing national trend that requires immediate and decisive action from law enforcement and community leaders at all levels.

As Elie Wiesel said: ''Indifference, after all, is more dangerous than anger or hatred.'' Leaders must stand up now against the rising trend of hate-driven terrorism against any ethnic or religious group, including Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others.

Hate and intolerance have no place in the greatest democracy in the world.

□ 1945

REMEMBERING DOUGLAS SELPH HENRY, JR.

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, Tennessee lost one of its most outstanding citizens, a person who loved Tennessee as deeply, if not more deeply, than anyone. Douglas Selph Henry, Jr., who served in the Tennessee State Senate in the Tennessee State House, served longer than any person ever did in the Tennessee General Assembly—44 years.

Senator Douglas Henry served 24 of those years with me. He was a gentleman, a scholar, a man who said he was a State man, as distinguished from a Federal man, and he was a public man, going to more events in Nashville in his district and for his community than anybody ever has. There was not an event that Douglas Henry wasn't there and helping to fund.

He was a conservative Senator. We had differences on issues many times. But Senator Henry was a man who you could disagree with, and he was never disagreeable. He was truly a gentleman at all times and a credit to his State and a credit to politics and a credit to his family.

He loved his wife, Lolly, who predeceased him, his five children, and his grandchildren. And though we differed on issues and he was pro-life, he cared about children after they were born, passed the mandatory child seatbelt law, and supported all types of education endeavors and endeavors to support mothers and young children. He was just a gentleman's gentleman. I was honored to spend time with him. It is a great loss to Tennessee. My thoughts go out to his family.

REPEAL OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to cover several very, very important points.

Tomorrow is International Women's Day, and I was going to talk about the role of women in our society, talk about my five daughters and what they have been doing in their life of service, and my wife, but events intervened. And yesterday, our good friends on the Republican side introduced a piece of legislation that will dramatically affect women, young and old; children. They introduced a repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

We are still trying to figure out all of the details involved in it. It is going to be a little hard, since it was changed late in the night. But there are some things we do know. I would like to start off with what we do know about the Affordable Care Act so that when we come to debate on the floor in the days ahead the Republican repeal and replacement of the existing Affordable Care Act, we have a foundation.

If you will indulge me, I will try to lay out some facts, not alternative facts, but facts. For example, 20 million Americans have gained coverage as a result of the Affordable Care Act. The percentage of uninsured in America is the lowest it has ever been. Mr. Speaker, 6.1 million young adults between the age of 19 and 25 have gained insurance coverage by being able to stay on their parents' insurance program—6.1 million. Of the Americans who have preexisting conditions, and that is 27 percent of us who have some sort of preexisting condition—heart issues, diabetes, broken legs, bad backs, whatever—27 percent of those Americans are guaranteed coverage even though they have a preexisting condition.

I was insurance commissioner in California for 8 years, and I must tell you the battles—well, it would take several days to talk about the battles that I had with the insurance companies who were denying coverage because of preexisting conditions. No longer the case in America. The Affordable Care Act said no. And by the way, the lifetime limits, they are gone, also.

California, which I have had the pleasure of being a citizen of, 3.7 million Californians are now insured under the Medi-Cal program, and 1.4 million have gained coverage through the exchange, called Covered California. About 1.2 million of those have received subsidies, averaging over $300 a month. Over 5 million Californians will be directly affected by a direct repeal.

And in the expansion of Medicaid, or Medi-Cal as we call it in California, if that is eliminated, that is a $16 billion hit to the State of California, and, obviously, an enormous hit to those 3.7 million Californians who have been covered under the Medi-Cal expansion.

Secondary impacts: employment. Maybe 200,000 jobs would be lost in California.

Individual stories: boy, they abound. Just this evening, I got a call from my wife, and she said: You really ought to talk about that young family in Woodland, California, whose 2-year-old son was diagnosed with some sort of a medical illness. They were able to get coverage before that under the covered California program. They went back a year later, and the kid had a brain tumor.

Fortunately, it was resolved because they had insurance. They were able to get the early diagnosis. And under the current law, the Affordable Care Act, they will be able to keep their coverage, even though previous to the Affordable Care Act, this young child and, quite probably, the family would be uninsurable.

It is working. The Affordable Care Act is working. Are there ways to improve it? Undoubtably, there are, and we could sit down and talk about ways to improve it.

But yesterday, our Republican colleagues introduced legislation that is going to have a profound negative impact on men and women all across this Nation. We will spend time in the days ahead to talk about the details, but we do know that, in general terms, there will be less coverage at a higher cost for literally everybody, except for a few special folks. And I would like to just put up a chart about that. Let's start with this one.

You see, in the repeal bill that was introduced, there are very serious tax cuts. We are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars of tax cuts over the next 2 years. Well, we all want a tax cut. But under the repeal, there are some very special people who are going to get a really big tax cut. Take a look at this.

The top 20 percent of taxpayers will receive 74.2 percent of the multihundred-billion-dollar tax cut, which is estimated to be somewhere in the range of $700 billion to maybe as much as $1 trillion, depending upon the final calculations.

By the way, the Congressional Budget Office has not had time to score, that is to tell us what the cost, what the benefits are, of the Republican proposal. But we do know from earlier studies of this, 75 percent of the multihundred-billion-dollar tax cuts go to the wealthy. Wow. And where does the money come from? It comes from the poor, it comes from the working families, the men and women who are struggling here in America. Maybe they are making a good living—$50,000 to $60,000 a year. They are going to see their benefit package reduced.

One more way to look at this is the famous pie chart. So who gets the tax breaks? Not the top 20 percent. Let's just focus more clearly here on the top one-tenth of 1 percent. What do they get? They are not a percentage. This is not the top 1 percent. This is the top one-tenth of a percent. What do they get? Well, they get nearly $200,000 a year in tax reductions. That is not bad. So the top 1 percent gets 57 percent of that 6-, 7-, $800-billion tax cut, and everyone else will get 43 percent.

So what we have here is a massive shift of wealth from the working men and women of America, from American families, to the very top—you know, the 1 percenters. That is who is getting the benefit in this massive tax cut that has been proposed. I don't know if that is good policy. It is not in my district. I don't think it is good policy for America.

We spent a lot of this last year in the Presidential campaign talking about the shift of wealth to the superwealthy and away from the great majority of Americans. But, here we go. In the very first big legislation of this year, we see the Republicans in a massive effort to increase the wealth of the superwealthy at the expense of the rest of Americans.

There are many, many more things to talk about here. But I want to just take a deep breath, which I need, because I guess I am getting rather excited about what is happening—or maybe angry is a better word—and turn to my colleague from the great State of Virginia to carry on while I take a deep breath and cool off a bit.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I don't blame the gentleman. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the Affordable Care Act. As we discuss this, as he has indicated, it helps a little bit to talk about what the situation was before the Affordable Care Act passed.

We knew that costs were going through the roof. We knew that those with preexisting conditions, if they could get insurance, would have to pay a lot more for that insurance. We knew that women were paying more for insurance than men. We knew that millions of people every year were losing insurance. That is what was going on before.

People talk about small businesses. Well, small businesses had trouble getting insurance because if they had a person with a chronic illness, it would be unlikely that they could afford small-business insurance. But now, the costs have continued to go up, but they have gone up at half the rate they were going up before.

Those with preexisting conditions can now get insurance at the average rate. Women are no longer paying more than men. And 20 million more people have insurance, not millions of people losing insurance every year, 20 million more people have insurance.

Now, the full name of the Affordable Care Act is the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. There are certain protections, like insurance companies can't cut you off after they have paid a certain amount. There are no more caps. They can't rescind your policy. After you get sick, they can't just decide not to renew your policy. There is no copay or deductible for prevention and cancer screening. We are closing the doughnut hole. The average senior has saved already about $1,000 because of the Affordable Care Act support for closing the doughnut hole. Those under age 26 can stay on their parents' policies. Those are some of the benefits of the Affordable Care Act.

Now, we didn't solve all of the problems. There are still problems. But if we are going to change the Affordable Care Act, we ought to improve the Affordable Care Act. Unfortunately, the bill that was introduced in the middle of the night fails on a number of areas.

Now, we would know precisely how bad a bill it is if they would wait a couple of days for the CBO to score the bill. It would point out all of the flaws. But there are just a couple.

One is just a fundamental principle that it purports to cover preexisting conditions without a mandate for coverage. We know that if you allow people to wait until they get sick before they buy insurance, people will wait until they get sick before they buy insurance. The average insurance pool is sicker, more expensive. Healthy people drop out, and the thing spirals out of control. We don't have to speculate how this works because we know.

New York State tried it, and the cost went up so much that when the Affordable Care Act came in with a mandate, the cost for individual insurance dropped more than 50 percent. Washington State tried it. It got so bad that by the time it got going a couple of years, nobody could buy insurance. Nobody could buy insurance in the individual market. So we know what happens when you try to cover people with preexisting conditions without a mandate.

□ 2000

So this plan, when it starts off with that policy, we know it is bound to fail.

We also noticed another flaw: that it saves money by allowing people to purchase insurance that doesn't cover everything. We have people buying insurance now that have to buy the basic essential benefits package. When you can start picking and choosing, you might save a little money, but things like maternity care, if that becomes an optional coverage, then anybody that wants that will not be able to afford it.

It will cost whatever it costs to have a baby. They just have to pay the bill. They might as well not have insurance. So that is because, if anybody purchases maternity insurance, it is because they expect to have a baby in the coming year, and it becomes unaffordable. If everybody pays the average, everybody pays everything, then everybody can afford the maternity coverage.

So allowing people to pick and choose what they want, that might help a few, but those that need that coverage won't be able to afford it.

A final flaw, as the gentleman pointed out, is massive tax cuts. Well, when you reduce the revenue available, two things happen: there is less support for Medicaid, and there is less support for people in paying their premiums. So in the fullness of time, fewer people will be insured; and so you have a plan with fewer people insured, watered-down benefits, and a plan that is ultimately going to fail.

That is not an improvement. If we are going to deal with the Affordable Care Act, we ought to have an improvement; and until we have an actual improvement, we ought to leave the Affordable Care Act alone.

I am delighted to be here discussing the Affordable Care Act with the gentleman, warning people that, if they go forward without a Congressional Budget Office evaluation so they know what is going on, we may have a plan that is a lot worse than even before the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. SCOTT, thank you so very much. You bring to this discussion a very important perspective as the ranking member of the Education and the Workforce Committee. You have that perspective of understanding the effect of this legislation on the working men and women and families of the United States.

I was just looking at some of the early comments that have come out about the bill, which is less than—well, it is almost 24 hours old now. Families USA said: ''The GOP healthcare proposal would be laughable if its consequences weren't so devastating. This bill will strip coverage for millions of people and drive up consumer costs.''

The Catholic Health Association of the United States said: ''This proposal would also take many backward steps in the continual effort to improve our healthcare system. . . .''

It goes on and on, and as more and more people come to understand the issues that the gentleman was discussing, I think they are going to find that, no, we will take the Affordable Care Act as it presently exists, and we will make some modifications to it to improve it.

The gentleman raised a very interesting point. It reminds me of another conversation I had earlier this week with my wife. She had gone to her hairstylist, who is about 29 years old, has run her own business for the last 7, 8 years, and she told me wife: It can't be true. They can't do it, can they? They can't kill the Affordable Care Act, the ObamaCare?

She said: For the first time in my life, I was able to get insurance; and now that I have insurance, there is this maternity benefit that is in my package, and now my husband and I, we can afford to have a child.

It was directly to the point the gentleman was making. If there is an option here on maternity coverage or any coverage for women's health, then we are going to find a situation where people will pick and choose; they will wait to get their insurance, and then the insurance pool is left with very expensive cases and the cost is not spread out.

The gentleman may have some other examples that may have come along or some other comments that he would like to make. I would be delighted to have the gentleman share those on the floor, and I will yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Shortly after the Affordable Care Act passed and went into effect, a young lady approached me in a store—she was a clerk in a store—and said: Bobby, don't let them repeal ObamaCare because my son is alive today because of ObamaCare.

I said: Well, what do you mean?

She said: Late last year, he was diagnosed with a fatal disease for which there is a cure, but we couldn't afford the cure. Thankfully, he lived to January 1, when ObamaCare kicked in, and we can afford the cure. My son is alive today because of the Affordable Care Act.

If it is repealed, what happens in that case? What happens in all of the other

cases when people don't have insurance? We have heard it represented that, well, anybody can get health care. All they have got to do is show up at the emergency room.

Well, yeah, that is fine. You can show up at the emergency room with a stroke, but you can't get blood pressure pills that could have avoided the stroke to begin with. They can stabilize you and send you home, but in terms of a cure or a surgery that may cure the problem, you don't get that. You just get stabilized in the emergency room, and that is not health care. We need people with insurance so they can obtain the preventive care and the corrective care that will get them off on the right track.

The gentleman talked about stripping coverage. When you take that kind of money out of the system, less support for Medicaid, fewer people getting Medicaid, less support for premium support so that people can actually afford it—if you look at the proposal, a lot of people can't use the tax cut because it is insufficient to pay the premium and they don't have the rest of the money.

So we need to make sure that CBO scores this. They will highlight all of these problems. They will show that many fewer people will be insured and that it is not an improvement. We shouldn't do anything unless we are actually improving the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The gentleman is correct on that. I was just looking at some statistics here a moment ago about the shifting of cost.

Under the Affordable Care Act, there are many, many benefits for Medicare. Leaving aside the Medicaid population for a moment, the Medicare population, available to every individual 65 and older, there have been significant improvements.

You mentioned the doughnut hole earlier, the drug benefit. If you run up heavy expenditures on your drugs, you would come to a point where you had to pay 100 percent. Medicare didn't cover it. Well, that doughnut hole is collapsing, and in another 2 years, the Medicare program will cover all of the drug costs without limitation.

Also, there is the free annual checkup that is available to everybody that is on Medicare. The result of these kinds of things, where drugs are available, blood pressure drugs, diabetes and the like, has led to—together with the additional taxes that the superwealthy are paying—has increased the solvency of Medicare by 11 years.

Now, the fiddling that is going on with the proposal that our Republicans have put through, it is not clear exactly what the result would be; but we do know that one of the major tax cuts is the elimination of this Medicare tax that the superwealthy have been paying, and that is over—together with one other tax is almost $340 billion. So the support for Medicare and the solvency of Medicare becomes a question mark as a result of the proposals.

We don't have all of the answers to this, but we do know that a 60-year-old presently getting an insurance policy from the Affordable Care Act, from ObamaCare, and making somewhere around $40,000 a year—perhaps working at Walmart—they are going to see a 57 percent reduction in the tax credit that is currently available versus what the Republican bill has.

So a 60-year-old making $40,000 a year under the ACA, ObamaCare, will receive somewhere around a $9,000 tax credit to support the purchase of insurance. Under the Republican bill, they are looking at $4,000—not $9,000, but $4,000—so 57 percent reduction in the support that they receive, probably leading to them not being able to afford insurance and winding up in your emergency room example.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. To add insult to injury, part of the scheme is to allow insurance companies to charge senior citizens even more. Right now they are limited to three times what they charge everybody else. Their bill allows up to five times. That is a two-thirds increase in the cost. So if the tax credit wasn't enough to begin with, it is going to get worse.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, let me make sure I understand. I was 60 a while ago, but let's say I am 60 and I am getting a health insurance policy under ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act. I may have to pay three times what a 25-year-old pays, but under the proposal that has been brought to us by the Republicans, I would pay five times?

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. That is right.

When everybody pays an average, if you allow some people to pay more, some people are going to pay less, but it is a zero-sum game. Every time they show somebody can pay less, then know that somebody will pay more. They have a scheme, for example—they call it association plans—where you get a group of healthy people, they come from out of the insurance pool and get a better rate because the insurance company will look at the association and say: Those are the young, healthy people, I can give them a better rate. They can save money.

What happens to everybody else? They have to pay more.

Last time they came up with this idea, the research showed that 80 percent of the people will pay higher premiums if you allowed people to withdraw from the pool, a healthy group. Now, actually, it will always work, because the group you pull out, if the bids come in higher than average, nobody is going to buy the insurance. They are going to go right back into the regular pool. So any time you have one of these things, it will only work if you are pulling out young, healthy people, and that leaves behind, for everybody else, higher rates.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The fundamental nature of insurance is you gather a large population of healthy, not-so-healthy, and perhaps some very sick people into a large population, and the cost is spread across the entire population.

What we may be ceding here in this particular proposal is the unravelling of that fundamental insurance concept with young people, healthy, not bothering to buy insurance, staying out of the market; and then, eventually, when they become ill, they will get back into the market, leaving everybody else to pay for it.

There is another piece of this shifting of cost that did occur prior to the Affordable Care Act—significantly reduced, as a result of it—and that is the uninsured still get sick.

The gentleman mentioned the emergency room a while ago, and for the most part, in America, a person can get to an emergency room with or without insurance; but if they don't have insurance, there is still a cost associated with the visit to the emergency room and any other thing they may need. They may need to have their leg repaired, a broken leg, or maybe they need an appendectomy or whatever. That is still a cost. The question is: Who picks up that cost? That is called uncompensated care, and it was a huge problem prior to the Affordable Care Act.

I had hospitals throughout my district and throughout California coming to me and saying: We can't afford this because we are not able to cover that uncompensated care for people that didn't have insurance that showed up at the emergency room.

Now, we know that from the early analysis done of the proposed legislation by our Republican friends that the number of uninsured is likely to increase, perhaps as much as 11 million people—maybe more, maybe somewhat less. Those people will still get sick. They may have money of their own to cover their costs, but the chances are they don't. That uncompensated cost will then be borne by the people who do buy insurance. It is a cost shift to those who have insurance.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. In fact, when we passed the Affordable Care Act, the estimated cost on a family policy was about $1,000 a year on the family policy for uncompensated costs shifted on to the insured public. In fact, in Virginia, it is estimated that approximately $15 a month is paid on everybody with insurance, $15 a month to go to the 400,000 people that would have had insurance if we had expanded Medicaid.

So if you have 100 employees, you can just figure you are paying about $1,500 a month extra because we did not expand Medicaid. 400,000 people will go to the hospital, won't pay, and when people with insurance go, they just have to pay a little extra, about $15 a month per person in the Commonwealth of Virginia because of that.

Mr. GARAMENDI. There are so many pieces to this healthcare system.

One thing that I want to put on the table here from my experience as insurance commissioner in California is that there are two fundamental parts

to the healthcare system in the United States, and really around the world. One of those two parts is how we collect the money and then pay for the services. We call that insurance. It is also Medicare, Medicaid, veterans' programs, and the like. These are the way in which we collect money and pay for the services.

□ 2015

The other part of the healthcare system is the delivery of services; these are the doctors, the clinics, the hospitals, and other providers, mental health providers, and the like. We often get confused by putting these two things together.

There has been a lot of talk about what we are doing with the Affordable Care Act. It is essentially a mechanism to pay for services. It is an insurance mechanism. Using the private insurance system, these various exchanges are set up to pool the population of people who do not have insurance from their employer, the individual people, individual coverage. It pools them so that you have that large population so that the cost is spread out across that large pool and the insurance becomes affordable. That is an insurance mechanism. That is a pooling. It has nothing to do directly with the provision of medical services.

The medical services are then provided out of that pooling arrangement by the individual doctors, maybe clinics, maybe hospitals, maybe group practices. Some of that will be capitated pay, and others will be a fee-for-service.

We haven't changed directly the way in which services are provided, that is, the delivery of services. And this is found in hospitals. In the Affordable Care Act, there was a penalty for hospitals that had readmissions for infections. What we have seen, as a result of that provision dealing directly with the way in which services are delivered in hospitals, is a dramatic decline in readmissions for hospital-acquired infections. What that means is some 60,000 people are still alive today because they didn't get a hospital-acquired infection.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, well, that part of the Affordable Care Act has actually improved the quality of service.

There are other things in the Affordable Care Act, such as funding for education of more providers, more doctors and nurses, and other providers because we have a lack of professionals. One area, for example, is psychiatry. If the Veterans Administration hired all the psychiatrists they need, there wouldn't be any for anybody else. We are so far behind. And the Affordable Care Act provides for that service.

As you pointed out, there is a difference between the ability to pay for the services and the services that are there. People frequently compare the single-payer plan in Canada, which in many areas is a rural area. So you don't have the critical mass of population to support a high-tech medical system. So if you are going to have a baby, it is probably going to be delivered by a family doctor, not an obstetrician. In some areas, you have to go 200 miles to find a neurosurgeon. That doesn't have anything to do with the fact that they can pay for the services. It is just that the services aren't there.

So when people talk about the health delivery system, as you pointed out, that is different. The fact that you can actually pay for services doesn't diminish the opportunity to have those services there; it actually increases the possibility that those services will be there.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly right, and I see that in my district. I have a large rural district in California. And, even today, there are areas where it is difficult to find a physician to get medical services.

This is one of the things, as you so correctly pointed out, the Affordable Care Act had a part of that. One of the titles dealt with the education of medical personnel. And so what we have seen, at least in California—and I suspect across America—with the Affordable Care Act in place, we are seeing that one of the fastest growing areas for new jobs is the healthcare sector because we are adding a lot of people—we need more—and then the educational programs that you talked about, which comes under the jurisdiction, I believe, of your committee. That is an important part.

One of the things that I hope the American public comes to understand is this is not just a sound bite that was used in a political campaign. We are going to repeal the ObamaCare and we are going to replace it is a nice sound bite. But we are talking about the lives of Americans, we are talking about their health, their ability to stay healthy, their ability to get medical services.

When you start tinkering with something that is so personal—that is what people say in my district: This is about my ability to stay healthy, my ability to get medical care. That is what I hear.

They are saying they are frightened. They are concerned that the legislation and all of the discussion in the political campaigns has been so heated that they are afraid they are going to lose what they presently have.

A quick look at what has been presented to Congress just in the last 24 hours indicates that a couple of facts are clear. First of all, there is an enormous tax break for the very, very wealthy, probably to the tune of 3- to $400 billion over 10 years. That is an incredible tax break for the superwealthy and for the health insurance industry. That, we are pretty sure, is in this legislation. We don't know the exact numbers; but we do know that early indications are that there is a shift, tax breaks for the wealthy, and cost increases for everybody else. That we know.

We also know that there are certain elements of support for individuals that will be removed. As we go about debating this and understanding the full import and get the Congressional Budget Office information, I think we are going to find that Americans are going to say: Well, wait. Wait, wait, wait. You are doing what to me? What are you doing to me? You are taking away my health insurance?

I suspect that will lead to a rebellion of some sort. Certainly it has agitated a lot of people in my communities about the justifiable fear of what may be coming to Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman indicated, in rural areas, one of the things that we have done is funded community health centers, which provides, where there are no professionals, a community health center where you can actually go to get comprehensive primary health care and then referred to a specialist somewhere if that is needed. That funding would be obviously in jeopardy.

As you pointed out, when you have tax cuts in terms of resources, that will translate into fewer people actually insured. They will have watered down benefits. And because there is no mandate to ensure that everybody is in the pool and they are trying to cover preexisting conditions, you have a prescription for disaster. That is not an improvement of the Affordable Care Act.

We need to insist that CBO score the legislation before we start taking votes so that people know exactly what they are getting into.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Virginia is absolutely correct about that. Unfortunately, my understanding is that as early as tomorrow—that would be Wednesday—that the committees intend to mark up the legislation. Normally, that means the version of the legislation that will pass out of committee is completed. And, I suspect, usually it is associated with a vote that takes place in committee. We don't know for sure if it is tomorrow or the next day, but we do know that if it is this week, we will not have the Congressional Budget Office information.

The gentleman mentioned something that I probably should have jumped on immediately because of my rural district, and those are the clinics. As a result of the Affordable Care Act, there are now seven significant clinic organizations that provide services to about 23 specific sites around my district. They are providing, really for the first time in many of the communities that I represent, immediately available healthcare services to a variety of people, some of whom have had an employer-sponsored health plan and others of whom are on Medi-Cal in California.

The apparent reduction in the Medicaid, Medi-Cal for California, support from the Federal Government that will occur over the next 2½ to 3 years will eliminate one of the principal ways in which those clinics have been able to continue to operate and, that is, the expansion of the Medicaid population in California.

It appears that the legislation that is proposed will shrink the Medicaid program across the Nation and severely curtail in California the support available for people who are currently on Medi-Cal. That will be devastating to these clinics in these rural areas.

We have had discussions about this. They say: Watch carefully. If this is what happens, we are going to be out of business. We are going to shut down our doors.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the clinics will shut down. Insurance companies will stop writing insurance if people can wait until they get sick before they buy insurance. The insurance companies reacted to that system in Washington State by selling nobody any insurance. So we know what is going to happen.

The CBO, when they score this, will point that out, and we will know exactly what the problems are.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) for joining us this evening. This is a fundamental part of American life, that is, our health care. It is about 18 percent of the total GDP, gross domestic product. It is extremely important in terms of the total well-being of our society and our economy.

Changes to the Affordable Care Act that are being proposed will have a dramatic effect. And what we do know about it is that there will be a massive shift of wealth from working men, women, and families to the superwealthy. We know that from the tax proposals that have been made in the analysis of the tax.

We also know that there is a very, very high probability that perhaps 11 million people will lose their insurance coverage, either in the private insurance market through the exchanges or through the Medicaid programs across the Nation. And the effect on the providers, the hospitals, the clinics will be profound.

So when we have something as important as this, it is just wrong. It is wrong for the majority in this House to put this legislation before the committees without a full hearing on what the effect will be. But it appears that tomorrow, Wednesday, we will have the first markup in this process.

What I want—and I think the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) does, too—is for the American public to hear the debate, to understand the implications where we are today with the Affordable Care Act and what it has brought to us in terms of quality and accessibility to health care and what it would mean with the proposed changes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for organizing the Special Order so that we could actually discuss some of the problems with going forward without a CBO score, without knowing what we are doing. Certainly, it is not an improvement in the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) for expressing Virginia's view. From California, it is, whoa, wait a minute, let's be careful.

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

TOPICS OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the privilege to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives, and I have a number of topics I would like to bring up this evening.

First, I would comment that I heard the words ''Affordable Care Act'' multiple times in the previous hour, and it just caught me each time I heard that. Abraham Lincoln would have had a difficult time saying such a thing being Honest Abe, and George Washington probably couldn't have said it at all.

As we know this, it is not affordable care and that is the reason that we have to address it. We knew this was going to happen. Of all the horrible stories we have heard about ObamaCare—this thing they call the Affordable Care Act—many of them were predicted here on the floor of the House of Representatives, Mr. Speaker. I predicted quite a lot of them myself, as did many of the Members who fought against that piece of legislation that was jammed down on us by hook, by crook, by legislative shenanigans.

We could see what was going to happen with this. It was slammed together by trying to circumvent the majorities, by pushing some things through on reconciliation. And we ended up with a piece of legislation that was the biggest bite they could get to create socialized medicine.

The worst part of ObamaCare, Mr. Speaker, was this: That it is an unconstitutional taking of God-given, American liberty. We are—and at least used to be and believe we are to be again—the freest people on the planet; and that our rights come from God; and that government can't take them away.

Many times here on the floor, I have said, Mr. Speaker, that the Federal Government hasn't figured out how to nationalize or take over our soul. That is our business, and we manage that. Our souls are the most sovereign thing that we have and are.

The second most sovereign thing we have and are is our skin and everything inside it. It is our health. It is the management of our health. And if Americans are not capable of managing their own health and making their own health decisions and pressing the marketplace to produce the health insurance policies that they desire, if Americans can't make those decisions, then it would just stand to reason, if that is true—and that is what Democrats seem to think—then there aren't any people on the planet who can manage their own health.

What I am pretty sure of is that if we don't think that regular, red-blooded Americans—especially those who are out there punching the time clock, running their business, starting a business, or working on commission, whatever they might be doing, the salt-of-the-Earth Americans—if they can't manage it, I am really sure that a bunch of leftists who are elected to office out of the inner cities of America aren't going to be able to do it.

□ 2030

And we have seen the success of that, the leftist agenda of ObamaCare, imposed upon America, commanding that we buy policies that are approved by the Federal Government. They would have liked to have established the Federal Government as being the single-payer plan and abolished all insurance whatsoever and simply taken care of everybody's healthcare needs so that one size fits all, and we could drift down into the mediocrity that most the rest of the world has exhibited for a long time.

This all started back in Germany in the latter part of the 19th century, when Otto von Bismarck decided that if he was going to get reelected, he had to make the Germans dependent upon him. And so he devised this plan called socialized medicine and he, more or less, trained the Germans to expect the federal government to make those decisions for them, pick up the costs for them; and, in doing so, that sense of dependency got Bismarck reelected in Germany.

Well, it is not that old a country in Germany, but this idea of Marxism comes right out of there. By the way, there is a bench in Berlin that honors Karl Marx, and a number of other statutes and monuments as well. That is where this came from, and we watched as other countries adopted it.

I once picked up—Mr. Speaker, I had a World War II veteran who came over to an event that I was doing in Hospers, Iowa, and he had gone up to his attic and he brought down these Collier's magazines. They were original Collier's magazines that started right at the end of the Second World War and went on through those years, for 2 or 3 or 4 years, and they were yellow and, of course, they were dated, and he presented them all to me.

He said: I want you to have these. I want you to read down through these

magazines and see what it was like in those days shortly at the end of World War II and in the Reconstruction era afterwards.

So I actually accepted all of those magazines, copied them, and gave him back the originals. I didn't feel right having them in my possession. But I read through them; and there were pictures there of doctors and nurses and healthcare providers in Great Britain that were haggard and tired and worn, and stories about how, because of the socialized medicine they passed in the United Kingdom, they had to see so many patients a day in order to make a living, and they couldn't pay attention to the patients so much as they had to pay attention to their schedule and turn them through quickly through the turnstiles in the healthcare system in Great Britain because health care was rationed in that way.

I have a friend who is a radio talk show host—and, actually, it is WHO Radio, one of Ronald Reagan's original radio programs where Ronald Reagan got his start—who comes originally from Great Britain; proud American. But both of his parents are gone, and both of his parents deaths can be attributed to the failed national healthcare system, socialized medicine that the United Kingdom has. He had told me several years ago: Once socialized medicine is established, you will not be able to undo it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I bring this up this way because this is our last best chance to turn this country in the right direction. It is our last best chance to throw off this mandate of socialized medicine that was established by hook, crook, and legislative shenanigan by the Democrats, and passed through in the final component in this Congress March 23, 2010. That event that took place, as I recall, I believe it was dated March 23, but it actually rolled over past midnight, but the RECORD showed March 23.

I went home that night worn out from days of fighting ObamaCare and doing all that I could do to put an end to it, to kill it off before it did what it has already done to the American people. And I laid down, thinking I would sleep the sleep of the dead, but I woke up in about an hour and a half and I got up and I wrote the repeal of ObamaCare, and it turned out to be the first repeal draft that emerged after ObamaCare had passed.

I certainly wrote it well before Barack Obama had signed the bill, although they hustled it out to him, I think, the next day, and that is when he signed it.

The repeal bill that I have introduced here—and it has passed the floor of this House a number of times; I have lost track of how many times, Mr. Speaker—it is only 40 words. And the last words in that bill are: ''As if such act had never been enacted.''

That is, Mr. Speaker, what we need to do. We need to send the full, 100 percent, rip-it-out-by-the-roots-as-if-it-had-never-been-enacted repeal out of the House and over to the Senate and set it on MITCH MCCONNELL's desk and let MITCH MCCONNELL figure out—Majority Leader MCCONNELL, Senator MCCONNELL figure out then how to get the votes put together in the United States Senate for a full, 100 percent repeal of ObamaCare.

The House will pass such a bill. It won't be hard to put those votes together. I wouldn't be surprised if there was a Democrat or two that was worried about their seat that would join us in such an endeavor.

Then, once that bill is over through the Rotunda and over on the desk of Senator MCCONNELL, then we should start down through with the individual repairs to the healthcare system that we need to do, that we all know we need to do and that we have talked about for a long time.

Some of these have been out here debated for 10 years in this Congress, Mr. Speaker, and, instead, we have got a different configuration that has been served up to us. But I submit that it is not too late to do it right. Send the full repeal over. That repeal can have an enactment clause of, say, a year from now. That is enough time for people to make their adjustments for their own health insurance and get it taken care of, especially under the provisions that I propose.

I would point out that my ObamaCare—and, yes, we Members of Congress are obligated to own our own ObamaCare policies and pay a substantial portion of the premium. By the way, mine went up when ObamaCare was imposed upon me by not quite $4,300 a year additional. That was my privilege to own an ObamaCare policy, but we are compelled to own that policy.

For me, I got the letter, dated last September 28, that said, as of December 31, at midnight, my ObamaCare policy was canceled. And it turned out that I would have been without insurance from New Years, from the stroke of midnight, auld lang syne, until whatever time it would take me to get that put together. So we went to work, and there was only one policy that actually qualified under ObamaCare, only one.

Of all the counties in America, roughly a third of the counties there is only one choice available to the American people; compelled by law to buy a policy or be penalized by the Federal Government. And your options are not that you get to keep the policy that you like or that you get to keep the doctor that you like. You don't even get to choose from a menu of what kind of health insurance policy you want.

Instead, for a third of the counties in America, you only have one choice, and that is buy the policy that is the only option that is available to you. So there is no shopping for prices. There is no looking at the kind of options you might want covered by your health insurance policy.

There is no freedom to go out there in the marketplace, and there is no marketplace that actually exists because the consumers are not making the demands for the kind of policies that they would like. Instead, it is the Federal Government dictating by mandate what the policy shall cover. And when that happens, the premiums go up—which anybody could figure out—and the coverage goes down.

Now we have people that—I would just look back to shortly before the election. The Thursday before the election we had an event south of Des Moines on a farm, and there, soon-to-be Vice President-elect MIKE PENCE arrived, as did Senator TED CRUZ, back to Iowa. I'm grateful to both of those gentlemen and friends.

As I gave my speech, I pointed out that I have seen people's health insurance premiums go from $8,000 a year to $10,000 a year. And then as I saw people in the crowd started waving their arm, and I say $12,000 a year, $14,000 a year, we had an auction going on, Mr. Speaker, and it came up to $20,000 a year. Looked to me like these were ''Ma and Pa'' family farm operations that were facing $20,000 in health insurance premiums, where not that long ago they would have been looking at 6 or 7 or $8,000 in health insurance premiums.

That has swept across this countryside. I talked to a gentleman here on the floor tonight whose health insurance premiums were $24,000. That is just not sustainable. You have to finally decide: I am going to take a risk and go without health insurance with those kind of costs.

That is driven by ObamaCare. It is driven by the mandates in ObamaCare. It is driven by the guaranteed issue, no consideration for preexisting conditions, and it is driven by a mandate such as you stay on your parents' health insurance until you are 26.

It goes on and on and on. OB care, maternity coverage, contraceptive coverage, you can name it, and also, no additional cost for your medical checkups. All of these things cost money, and they are built into the premium, and every time you add another bell or whistle or accessory to your health insurance policy, the premium goes up and up and up.

When the insurers find out that they are losing money, they start to drop out of the marketplace. They drop out of the marketplace, and when they do, there is less competition.

When there is less competition, prices go up, Mr. Speaker. This is what we have seen happen over the years since the implementation of ObamaCare. It is a calamity. It will sink ObamaCare. If we don't touch it, it will sink and it will be gone. It will implode upon itself. It cannot be sustained. We know that on this side of the aisle from about here on over. They know it intuitively over on this side of the aisle from about there on over. But

the difficulty is that politically they have embraced ObamaCare and they have decided they are going to hold onto it and protect it.

Why?

I think part of it is they want to hold on and protect the legacy of President Obama, who, if all had gone well, would have ridden off into the sunset. He doesn't seem to be doing that, Mr. Speaker.

But now we are at this place where we have the votes in the House to do a full, 100 percent repeal of ObamaCare, and that is what we should do.

Tomorrow, I understand that the gentleman from Ohio, and perhaps others, will introduce legislation that will be described as a full repeal of ObamaCare. I wish it were so, but it is designed to fit within the reconciliation standards. It is a legislation that once made it to President Obama's desk and received a veto. This time, presumably, it could go to President Trump's desk and receive a signature. That is good. I favor that as an improvement in the right direction. But the full right thing we need to do is the 100 percent repeal.

We shouldn't be sustaining any kind of mandate whatsoever. Let the States determine what the mandates might be, but don't let them lock people into their States and refuse to let them buy health insurance from outside of those State lines. And it looks to me that the bill, as introduced by leadership, doesn't really allow for the facilitation of buying insurance across State lanes.

So here is what I suggest we do, Mr. Speaker. Send the full, 100 percent repeal over to the Senate. Pick up the bill that was a repeal just about a year ago, send it over to the Senate, too. Then, what we have is MITCH MCCONNELL can choose from the menu on what he can get done, but the pressure for the full repeal will build if the House sends it to the Senate, and the odds of the full repeal get greater and greater.

Then the House, doing its job—and we are not obligated to negotiate a deal out of the House and the Senate and the White House. It is the judgment of the House that needs to be reflected here in this Chamber.

This most deliberative body that we have, the voice for the American people, we should never be trapped into thinking that we can't pass anything out of the House if we don't first have a handshake with the President and the majority in the Senate. That has handcuffed us for the last 8 or more years.

The strategic thinking has been that we don't even try to move anything out of the House unless we know they can take it up in the Senate and unless we know that we can get a signature from the President, because anything else is a waste of time.

Well, it is not necessarily a waste of time, Mr. Speaker, not necessary at all. In fact, we need to send out of here our highest aspirations. So I say this: send the full repeal over to the Senate, and then pick up the repairs, the replacements, and the reform, those things that we know we need to do, and they can stand alone with or without the full repeal of ObamaCare.

For example, we need to send PAUL GOSAR's bill that repeals components of the McCarran-Ferguson Act that allows for insurance to be bought and sold across State lines. PAUL GOSAR has done a lot of work on that bill, and his predecessor out of Arizona, John Shadegg, pushed that bill for about 16 years here in the House of Representatives. In his last week or so here in the House, he said: I have one regret, and that regret is I should have pushed harder for the repeal of McCarran-Ferguson so that we could be selling and buying insurance across State lines.

□ 2045

He should have pushed harder. I recall John Shadegg pushing very hard on that, and he just couldn't get it there. We all couldn't get it there. Now PAUL GOSAR has that bill out of the Judiciary Committee. We passed it out a week and a half ago, and it is hanging on the calendar now, and it should come to this floor. The votes would be here to pass PAUL GOSAR's repeal of McCarran-Ferguson, and we should send that over to the Senate. Passing that piece of legislation would enable insurance to be sold across State lines, and that would set the competition up between the 50 States.

I recall the debate here on the floor of the House in 2009 and 2010 when the data came out that a typical young man in New Jersey at the time, a healthy 23-year-old, would pay an average of about $6,000 for his health insurance premium for the year—$500 a month, $6,000. A similarly situated healthy young man in Kentucky would be paying $1,000 a year.

Now, what is the difference between those two States?

The cost of providing that care and the far fewer mandates in the State of Kentucky and a lot of mandates in the State of New Jersey.

So why wouldn't we let a young man in New Jersey buy a health insurance policy in Kentucky? What are the odds that he is going to be insured if he can get a policy for $1,000 as opposed to $6,000?

We know that far more Americans would be insured if they had the options and didn't have to buy all the bells and whistles. He probably doesn't need maternity. He probably doesn't need contraceptive. Maybe he is not too concerned about the preexisting condition component of this. If he is 23 years old and on his own, he is not worried about a 26-year slacker mandate. So that is the comparison of what could happen if we passed GOSAR's bill and repealed McCarran-Ferguson and allowed people to purchase insurance across State lines. That should be number one.

Number two would be full deductibility of everyone's health insurance premiums. Today there is something like 160 million Americans that get their health insurance from their employer. When the employer sets up a group plan as a rule and they negotiate those premiums, whatever that premium might be, let's just say it is $10,000 a year per employee, they lay that $10,000 on the barrel head, pay that insurance premium, and that goes into the books as a business expense, and it shows up on the schedule C as a health insurance premium.

But if you are a sole proprietor, if you are a partnership, if you are a maand-pa operation and you have one part-time employee, that makes you an employer. If you are an employer, you can deduct the premiums to your employees, but you can't deduct your own premium.

There are 20.9 million Americans similarly situated in that scenario, Mr. Speaker, where that 20.9 million Americans are compelled under ObamaCare to pay for health insurance premiums and meeting those standards, and maybe they have only got one choice like one-third of America's counties; maybe they only have two choices like another third of America's counties; or maybe they have more than two choices like the other third. But at least 1,022 counties in America have only choice: buy the insurance policy—that is your only choice—or be in violation of the law and be fined and be punished, but do it with after-tax dollars instead of before-tax dollars. That is the burden that they are carrying right now.

Mr. Speaker, 20.9 million Americans are disenfranchised in that way. Yet they would be employers and they would be in the effort of trying to provide health insurance for themselves, trying to start up a business perhaps with maybe one part-time employee, with now this big disadvantage that they don't get to deduct their health insurance premiums.

Maybe they are that couple that is $20,000 or even $24,000 for a premium after-tax dollars, and by the time the Federal Government steps in and taxes the first, say, 36 percent, and the State steps in and taxes another 9 percent, now we are at 45. You can add a few more various and sundry taxes in there, but a round number is half. So your $20,000 premium takes $40,000 of earnings in order to break even with that premium. But the employer gets to write off the $20,000 as a business expense, so they have that advantage, and you are seeking to compete with an established larger employer. This is wrong. So the second bill we should pass out of this House is the full deductibility of everybody's health insurance premiums.

The McCarran-Ferguson repeal under PAUL GOSAR, then the full deductibility of everybody's health insurance premiums—oh, that is the King bill, by the way, Mr. Speaker, and I am hopeful that that can be passed through and become law. It is a superior approach to providing refundable tax credits.

We need to learn some things. For example, when we hear tax credits, it really means in this discussion refundable tax credits.

What is a refundable tax credit?

That is when the Federal Government sends you money whether you have a tax liability or not. So that would be that if—and the range in this proposal that emerged yesterday is between $2,000, $4,000, up to $14,000 in refundable tax credits to help people pay for their insurance premiums.

Well, that makes me feel good, the idea of trying to help people that can't afford it, but in the process of doing that, we are also helping a lot of people that can afford it. Nonetheless, when you are paying people's health insurance premium, that becomes an entitlement. If everybody is entitled to having a health insurance policy, and if you don't have the money to do so—and I think they use the standard of $75,000 or less—then the Federal Government will subsidize your policy and conceivably buy your policy. Now we have another new entitlement that grows the Federal Government, raises taxes, and spends hundreds of billions of dollars because we don't want to say no to people. They had a policy handed to them by ObamaCare, which the taxpayers cannot afford.

We have $20 trillion in national debt right now, Mr. Speaker, and we have a debt ceiling crisis coming at us within just a matter of days or, at a maximum, weeks. This Federal Government needs to get a handle on its spending and it needs to get back to balance. We will never get there if we keep growing entitlements here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

So that is two items that need to be brought through. The first is the full repeal. Item number one, the repeal of the McCarran-Ferguson Act, sell insurance across State lines. Item number two, pass the King bill for full deductibility of everybody's health insurance premiums so that everybody paying for health insurance is on the same standard as employers are.

Then the third thing is the medical malpractice reform, and that is the tort reform legislation that passed out of the Judiciary Committee on the same day with PAUL GOSAR's bill, Mr. Speaker. That legislation puts a cap on medical malpractice settlements of $250,000 in noneconomic damages—a lot of us would call that pain and suffering—and pay for pain and suffering. That is a component of it, but it is not the whole picture. So we adopt language that is actually borrowed from California which passed this medical malpractice reform 40 years ago and capped it at $250,000.

By the way, that is still the law in California today. The individual that signed it into law, his name is—at that time he was the Governor of California, Mr. Speaker. Maybe people don't remember who the Governor of California was 40 years ago: Jerry Brown. The Governor of California today: Jerry Brown.

Is there an effort to repeal the tort reform legislation that has been part of California's law for 40 years? No.

In fact, Texas has borrowed from those ideas and implemented that into law, and they are finding that they have got doctors and medical practitioners moving to Texas now because they are not subjected to the outrageous medical malpractice claims that they have been in multiple States across the country.

So this tort reform legislation that just passed out of the Judiciary Committee a week and a half or so ago is another prime piece of legislation that should come to the floor for debate and vote, and I am confident it would pass the House and send it over to the Senate, and then give MITCH MCCONNELL some tools to work with.

That is not the end of it, Mr. Speaker. I know that under the legislation that has been proposed by leadership and just rolled out yesterday, they expand health savings accounts. I think they nearly doubled them, as I understand, $6,000-some for an individual, maybe $12,000-some for a couple. That is close, but I know that it is not precise, Mr. Speaker.

I agree that we need to expand health savings accounts. I think we need to expand them more. My legislation expands them to $10,000 for the individual; $20,000 for the couple. But health savings accounts need to be expanded, and they need to be expanded so that people can use them and manage them. They can put money in tax free, take money out to pay their premiums, take money out to pay their healthcare costs, and grow the health savings account so that when it grows to a point where it becomes $50,000, $100,000, $400,000, $500,000, double that by the time of retirement or more. With that kind of money sitting in a health savings account, then there will be people that will negotiate a health insurance policy, but as a catastrophic policy. They will conclude that they want a policy that has got a high deductible, a fairly high copayment, and that they will take care of their own incidental healthcare costs out of pocket and try to grow their health savings account.

In the process of doing that, if you have got the capital in your HSA, then you can negotiate the premium or your monthly health insurance premium down by negotiating for a catastrophic plan, taking care of the incidental costs yourself out of your health savings account. To some degree, you become your own insured for the lower dollar items while you still have catastrophic insurance for the big things.

We have done the numbers on this. Even when it was down to the cap in 2003 that rolled out of here that was capped, the HSAs were capped at $5,150 for a couple. We did the math on that. If a couple started out at, say, age 20, worked for 45 years, round numbers, worked out to be age 65, Medicare eligibility, then they would conceivably be sitting there with $950,000 in their health savings account. I have well over doubled this. In fact, take it up to $10,000, $20,000 for a couple where 5,150 was the opening bid in 2003. So we are not quite four times that amount, yet healthcare costs have gone up. So I am not proposing that we end up with $4 million in the account, but maybe some number that is 2.5 or so million.

Arriving at Medicare eligibility with six—well, seven figures times some number in their health savings account leaves these couples in a position where they could go out on the open market and purchase a paid-up Medicare replacement policy for life, pay for that up front, and then the Federal Government wants to tax anything that comes out of the health savings account as ordinary income. But my answer to that is no, don't do that. If they will take themselves off the entitlement roll by buying a Medicare replacement policy, then let them keep the change tax-free.

Now this becomes a life management account. Not only is it a health savings account, it is a pension plan, and it is incentive to manage your health insurance premiums and your healthcare costs to get your checkups, to get your tests, to watch your weight, get your exercise, and manage your life because you are going to have a nest egg at the end of your working life that you want to be able to spend doing enjoyable things. If your health is a bad experience, then you have got the money there to cover it to make sure that you are taken care of.

This is where we need to get people in this country. We are just awfully short of people willing to think outside the box and to think about what we should do here in America. We are not just some regular, ordinary, humdrum, run-of-the-mill country, Mr. Speaker. We are the United States of America. We are the unchallenged greatest nation in the world. We didn't become this way because we are dependent upon government. We became this way because we have a robust appetite for freedom. People have gone out and blazed their own trails. In a lot of cases, settling this country, they literally did that, blazed a trail through the timber and went out and settled the West.

When our original Founding Fathers arrived here on our shores, they arrived in a land that had, as far as they knew, unlimited natural resources. They had unlimited freedom because they were a long ways away from King George. They came for their religious freedom as well. They were farmers, they were shopkeepers, they were individual entrepreneurs with a dream, and they forged the American Dream. They did it on religious faith, on free enterprise capitalism, and on God-given liberty. That created this robust country in this giant petri dish that was the only huge experiment that the world has ever seen: a nation that is formed on ideas and ideals.

Here we are, the descendants, the recipients, the beneficiaries of their risk and of their dream, beneficiaries of their ideals. All we have to do is preserve them. Our Founding Fathers had to hammer them out.

□ 2100

They had to conceive of these ideas about God-given rights, and then they had to articulate it. They had to write these ideas over and over again in many different configurations so that the populace began to understand what it really meant when you have rights that come from God. Then they had to sell this to the colonists. And then they had to defy King George and fight for that freedom.

All of that took place with the desks that were there and those who gave their lives for our freedom and our liberty. And what is our job, Mr. Speaker? Hang on to it, maintain it. Now, in this case, with ObamaCare, we have got to restore it. That is what we are faced with.

In my view, it is not that hard, if we just come together here and do that which we know is right, send the full repeal of ObamaCare across the rotunda to the Senate, pass PAUL GOSAR's bill selling insurance across State lines, the repeal of McCarran-Ferguson, make our health insurance premiums fully deductible, and expand our health savings accounts. Do those things and pass the tort reform legislation which will diminish the malpractice premiums that our doctors and practitioners are paying. If we do that much and eliminate the mandates that tie us down in such a way that we don't have the latitude to work any longer, we don't need a mandate that requires every insurance policy to keep your kids on until age 26. There are a lot of other ways to manage that. If you as a family want to buy such a policy, the insurance companies will provide it. You don't need to have the law.

The preexisting condition component of this, yes, we have compassion for people who are uninsurable. In fact, 37 of the States, by my recollection, had policies before ObamaCare, Iowa included—and I helped manage that as former chairman of the Iowa Senate State Government Committee—37 States, by my recollection, had established high-risk pools.

These high-risk pools used tax dollars to buy the premium down so that those who had preexisting conditions and could not be insured could have their health insurance premiums subsidized by the taxpayers.

Now, some States are more generous than others. That is how it will be. But it is a far better solution than the Federal Government being involved in preexisting conditions just because they think that is the right political answer, Mr. Speaker.

We will see how this unfolds as the days and few short weeks come forward here. I am hopeful that we will be able to get together in conference and the Republicans can hammer out a solution that can be signed off on by, hopefully, all of us.

I am hopeful there will be some Democrats that understand you don't want to go back home again and tell your constituents that you fought to defend ObamaCare, this thing that my colleagues, scores of times—in fact, thousands of times here on the floor—called the Affordable Care Act. We know, Mr. Speaker, it is not affordable and that the premiums are way out of sight; the coverage can't be used, in many cases, because the deductibles are too high for most people; and that the insurance companies are bailing out one after another. And perhaps a year from now, if we don't do something, there will be great chunks of the American people who will have no options whatsoever.

So I suggest we do this the prudent way: do the full repeal and send single components of the reform rifle shot out of the House over to the Senate. Let the Senate take them up. Or, if they think it is prudent, package them up and send them back to us as a package. If the House has once passed it, and it comes back to us in a package, I think we will pass it again, Mr. Speaker.

So these are intense times, and America's destiny is being determined. It is being determined because we have elected Donald Trump as President of the United States.

I think about what it would have been like if I had woken up on the morning of November 9 and we had someone other than Donald Trump elected to be President, and how the optimism that just poured forth since that day has been terrific.

You can recognize, right after the election, that people had a spring in their step, and they are more optimistic and more outgoing. If you would walk into the grocery store, people would come over and start a conversation. If you walked into a restaurant, they would do the same thing.

They were just more outgoing and more friendly and they wanted to engage with each other. They still want to engage with each other. The stock market has soared up over 21,000, and there has been over $3 trillion in wealth created just in the stock market alone, Mr. Speaker.

So this high level of optimism that we have brings with it a high level of responsibility. It is not only to the ObamaCare change, but the pledge that was made by Donald Trump many times throughout the campaign was a full, 100 percent repeal of ObamaCare. I always say 100 percent repeal will rip it out by the roots as if it had never been enacted. The language is a little different, but the meaning is identical. The meaning is identical, Mr. Speaker: a full repeal of ObamaCare.

President Trump has said many times we need to be able to sell and buy insurance across State lines. That is another Trump promise. Of course, he has got people he is working with. TOM PRICE is head of HHS. He is a good man whom I first met here on the floor of the House of Representatives when he came in as a freshman a number of years ago. I watched as he paid attention to the healthcare issues then. And the constitutional issues, I might add. My first encounter with TOM PRICE was on constitutional issues, and it was a positive one.

So we are at this place with a new President that has, halfway into his first 100 days, a number of campaign promises that he has yet to live up to, but a great many that he has lived up to. It looks to me like Donald Trump has at least somebody in an office somewhere in the White House that has a list of all the campaign promises, and they are checking those off one by one as he accomplishes the promises that he has made as a candidate.

That is a laudable thing, Mr. Speaker. Yet, he is being bogged down by a series of stories that have, to some degree—I don't want to quite say handcuffed his administration—but it has made it difficult to operate in a flexible and a fluid way.

This has to do with, I think, it is leakers within; people who should be loyal to the United States and, hopefully, loyal to the President of the United States, who have been leaking information out.

When The New York Times is publishing that they have got inside information that has been leaked to them from the intelligence community, nobody seems to be troubled that The New York Times is going to people in the intelligence community or receiving messages from them and taking information that is about classified activities of our Federal Government and printing the stories about that classified information in their paper.

It is not only The New York Times. I see Heat Street here, The Guardian, The Washington Post. That all comes to mind. McClatchy.

Here is a series of things that have taken place that bring into question the integrity of some people that work within government and some of them that work within our intelligence community. Here are just a string of events, Mr. Speaker, that bring us to a conclusion about what is going on in our Federal Government.

It was in the summer that Heat Street reported that the FBI applied—in June it is reported—applied for a FISA warrant wiretap to survey people in the Trump campaign who had ties to Russia. Roughly late June, this report came out. FISA is the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Special warrants have to be achieved in a FISA court. These warrant requests are classified. The activity around them are classified. So, if it is classified, how is it that Heat Street reported that the FBI applied for FISA warrants to wiretap people in the Trump campaign last June?

Well, that is because classified leakage went into the ears of the Heat

Street reporters, or I suppose we could say they made it up. And if it were the only story out there, that might be the most likely, but we have a number of other stories.

The Guardian reported that a FISA warrant request was made to monitor four Trump campaign staffers for conflicts or for communications with Russia and Russians. That story in The Guardian matches up with the story in Heat Street roughly last June that there was a FISA warrant request to monitor four of Trump's campaign staffers for their communications with Russia.

So there is story number one and two. Heat Street writes one; The Guardian writes another. Both of them are writing about what, if we had the real information in front of us, would be classified: the application for FISA and the results of that.

The report comes back and says those applications were denied. They were not based upon a reasonable suspicion that there was, I will say, collusion with Russians.

So here is item number three. McClatchy reported that the FBI and five other agencies were investigating Russian influence on the U.S. Presidential election. So we have two stories—one from Heat Street, one from The Guardian—that says that there was an application for a FISA warrant. That FISA warrant was presumably turned down, by reports, but then there is a report that there is the FBI and five other agencies that are investigating the Russian influence on the U.S. Presidential election. That is a McClatchy report.

Now, this is starting to add up. I am starting to see here is a sign there is something going on and there is a leakage of classified information—a sign something is going on and leakage of classified information. Then, the report of the investigation of the FBI and five other agencies.

Now, here is the next story. The New York Times reports that the FBI is investigating Russian Government communications with Trump campaign, but there is no evidence of those communications resulting in any kind of collusion, at least. That is a New York Times report.

So these stories have been dropped in: Heat Street, McClatchy, The New York Times.

Here is another New York Times report. The Obama administration allowed the NSA to share globally intercepted personal communications with 16 other Federal agencies without a warrant. That, I believe, refers to a January directive that came from Barack Obama that opened up the ability to communicate between the intelligence agencies so that they could share classified information among them, rather than compartmentalize and share that information on a need-to-know basis. That is item number five.

Item number six, the Obama administration officials tried to spread information to media showing Russian involvement to help Trump and his election. That is a story that was pushed out and perpetuated. It was pushed out by, of course, the Hillary campaign and others.

So the weight of this cumulative effect of these stories is adding up.

I would add, also, that on October 31 of last year, just a little over a week before the election, Hillary Clinton sent out a tweet that said—I am trying to remember the words that she used—it was communication specialists or intelligence officials. It was a reference to experts in communications and computers and that they had identified that there were investigations going on and there were communications between the Russians and the Trump campaign.

It looked to me like that was an effort on the part of the Clinton campaign to spread these rumors that had been planted all the way along throughout the summer by Heat Street's report that there was a FISA wiretap warrant that was turned down, and by The Guardian's report of presumably the same event of a FISA warrant turned down because they didn't show that there was any activity there that was worthy of a warrant; the McClatchy report that said the FBI and other agencies are investigating Russian influence. Then you have got the two Times' reports.

Here is the third New York Times report. They reported that General Flynn talked to Russian officials about how Trump would handle Russian sanctions. This is presumably from a wiretap of the Russian Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Speaker.

Now, if that surveillance is taking place of a Russian official, a Russian Ambassador in the United States, if those activities are typical surveillance activities that would go on in most any country that had the capability, then that information is still classified. And if the conversation took place between General Flynn and the Russian Ambassador—and we all, I think, believe that it did—that conversation and the contents of it would be classified.

So how did this leakage come out to The New York Times about the phone call or calls that General Flynn may have had with the Russian Ambassador?

□ 2115

The leakage of that information would be a Federal felony because it is classified information, facing 10 years in a Federal penitentiary as a penalty. Yet America is hyperventilating about a tweet that Donald Trump sent out that said that Trump and Trump Tower had been hacked or wiretapped by the Obama administration. I know he said President Obama. He put the responsibility on President Obama. It is pretty easy to conclude he may have also just meant the Obama administration.

Do we think that this wiretapping is taking place?

I think so. I think the evidence, at least, of the telephone conversation between General Flynn and the Russian Ambassador is pretty strong. Since it has not been denied by General Flynn or by Vice President PENCE, I am going to assert here in this CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that that took place, that it was surveilled, and that the information in the exchange, which they claim there is a transcript of the conversation, was leaked out to the press. The press didn't release the specific language that had been used but wrote the general narrative about it in much the same way that a Member of Congress might if they walked into a classified briefing, listen to the briefing, and come back and talk about their general understanding of what they saw in there rather than the specific language that was used and uttered.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that we have at least one Federal felony that has taken place, that it likely is because of leak or leaks that came from the intelligence community. It is pretty clear that President Obama granted the authority—I don't know if I can quite say ordered—granted the authority that all of our intelligence community, all 17 of them, could exchange classified information freely, and that vastly multiplied the number of people who had access to this information and dramatically increased the odds that there would be leakage about these communications that appear to be surveillance of—perhaps it looks like the Trump team, at least people who were on the Trump team, the Trump campaign perhaps, and that there was an effort that goes back as far as last June.

This team of the FBI and the five other intelligence organizations, agencies that are there, did they form that team in June?

It looks likely.

Did they get any real information due to lack of a FISA warrant from that point on?

We don't know, but we have got a pretty good idea that there was a FISA warrant that was approved in October and that information came out of that and maybe other sources that was leaked for the purpose of hurting this Presidency and hurting the effectiveness of then-President-elect Trump and now President Trump.

I submit that President Trump should purge from the executive branch all of the political appointees for whom there is any question about their loyalty. Any of those whose loyalty is beholden to Barack Obama, any of those who can't embrace a conservative government that is bringing us back to constitutional principles, they should all be gone. And those civil servants whose jobs are protected, there have been a good number of Obama people who have burrowed themselves into civil service jobs in order to handcuff President Trump. I say for them, when you can identify them, get a room somewhere, put them in it, pay them

their wages. They will get tired of their job over time, but the damage they will do if you let them have a desk will be far greater than what we get out of them for the paycheck we are giving them. I say purge as many as possible, Mr. President. Put those people in place who are loyal to you, who want to carry out your agenda.

Here is another news report. The Washington Post reports that U.S. investigators examined Jeff Sessions' contacts with Russian officials while he was a campaign adviser to Trump. This report from The Washington Post says that U.S. investigators examined Jeff Sessions' contacts with Russia. So he was under surveillance. He was at least under investigation, it sounds like, if this story is right. Here we have a seated United States Senator, a stellar individual.

If I were going to try to compare the character that I know Jeff Sessions is, and I look around this town, I ask: Who matches the character of Jeff Sessions?

Not many. I would say Vice President PENCE, and then the list gets pretty short after that. Jeff Sessions has a very high degree of character, and he is imminently a constitutionalist, an adherent to the rule of law, a dedicated patriot, and one who makes his decisions within the bounds of the Constitution, of the law, of the rules that exist. He is a great respecter of the order of a civilized society and a terrific Attorney General.

There was no better choice that could have been reached by Donald Trump than Jeff Sessions. But here he is, subject to this kind of—at least a report that there is an investigation, Mr. Speaker. I think if I wanted to know about Jeff Sessions' activities, if I thought that it was my business, I would just ask him. When he answered the question from Senator FRANKEN, the question was in the context of did you have any discussions with Russians with regard to any campaign activities that you might have cooperated or colluded with?

If AL FRANKEN had asked that question precisely, then the answer would have been precise as well.

I can understand why Jeff Sessions' answer came back no, that he hadn't dealt with the Russians. I do a lot of meetings, and if I am asked a question about the context of a subject matter, I will answer within the context of that subject matter. I think that is what Jeff Sessions did. Most of the Senators—I will say all of the Senators sitting there on that committee who heard those questions asked and saw the answers of Jeff Sessions, and then they and their staff and the public, weeks went by, not a peep about anybody being concerned about the answer that Jeff Sessions gave.

Why?

Because all of those Senators sitting on that committee listening to his testimony and the other Senators who were watching that testimony either from in the room or around the Hill on C–SPAN, and their staff who were monitoring those hearings all understood that you have people from multiple countries come into your office on an irregular basis, and in a matter of months one might meet with the Greeks, the Russians, the French, the Germans, pick your country in South America or Asia. There is a constant flow of people coming through my office, and I know there is a constant flow of people from other countries coming through the offices of probably every United States Senator.

So when Jeff Sessions said that he hadn't met with the Russians within the context of discussing the campaign, which was the heart of the question asked by Senator FRANKEN, no Senator was concerned about his answer that he hadn't met with the Russians because they understood the context within which he was answering that question. Had that not been the case, some Senator, like CHUCK SCHUMER, would have woken up the first day instead of after they were able to gin it up and turn it into a media story, Mr. Speaker.

We have a country to save. We have an ObamaCare to repeal. We have a healthcare policy in this country that needs to be rebuilt logically by preserving our doctor-patient relationship, encouraging competition between insurance companies, letting people be in charge of the policy they want to buy, providing full deductibility, fixing the lawsuit abuse, being able to sell insurance across State lines and expand health savings accounts. All that needs to happen. I am hopeful that it can happen within the next couple of months, Mr. Speaker.

While that is going on, we need to look over at the White House and encourage this President: Purge those people from your midst who owe their loyalty to Barack Obama. They are undermining your Presidency. You have to fight the moles from within, the media from without, the George Soros-organized protesters who are on the streets of America every weekend with a different cause. They will continue this until the public gets tired of it.

Mr. Speaker, the President needs to understand that he has a lot of enemies in this country and a great big job. His ability to take on the mainstream media has been demonstrated. Now it is a little bigger hurdle that needs to happen, too. The intelligence community from within, there are a lot of good, dedicated patriots there. They need to purge those people from their midst as well who are not loyal to the United States of America and those who are working against the foreign policy agenda of this President.

We need to rebuild America. We need to make America great again. We need to restore our economy. We need to get our tax cuts done. We need to get some more regulatory reform. Let's have this robust, growing economy kicked off and see that 3, 3½, 4 percent growth that this country can do with the freedom that has been delivered to it, much of it by the pen of our new President, Donald Trump.

I am optimistic about our future, although we have our challenges in front of us, Mr. Speaker, and I urge that my colleagues step up to this task, keep it constitutional, keep it free market. Remember the individual freedom, the God-given liberty, and the legacy that we are leaving for succeeding generations. Let's get this job done and make America great again.

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

CONCERNS OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BACON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 17 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, thank you for your courtesies.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of topics that I choose to debate this evening, but before I do that, I would like to first raise a very important concern. I will soon draft a letter that my colleagues will join in signing to the President of the United States on the extensive crisis of starvation in Somalia and South Sudan.

Just recently, we met with leadership—with my colleague KAREN BASS and a number of other colleagues—of South Sudan speaking about the extensive starvation in sub-Saharan Africa.

I am looking forward to a response from this White House upon receipt of the letter that they will engage with the world community on providing immediate food aid and other resources to the people of sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Somalia and South Sudan.

It is something that I am well aware of because my colleague, the late Mickey Leland, Congressman from the 18th Congressional District in 1989, and years before that as the co-chair of the Select Committee on Hunger, was very concerned about starvation in that very same area because of the drought and terrible climatic conditions, huge loss of life. Congressman Leland was constantly responding with his own personal sacrifice of taking food over to that area as well as seeking to encourage others in the world family, United Nations to do so. In 1989, he, in actuality, lost his life in a plane crash in Ethiopia delivering resources to those individuals caught in a terrible condition, a valley, a desert-like atmosphere attempting to save their lives or to bring grain in. I know full well that his spirit reigns as he might have been engaged in this if he were alive in 2017 to see this terrible disaster occurring right in front of us.

We need the United States to be very active in the world community. The U.N. Secretary-General has now pronounced this to be a horrific disaster needing the attention of world leaders and the world community. I want to

put that on the record because I want to offer to the people of Somalia and South Sudan my deepest sympathy. There are other issues in South Sudan that we must address, but we also need to be concerned in the area of food starvation, loss of lives of hundreds of thousands of women and children who are now suffering, and it needs to be addressed.

□ 2130

But I really came to the floor in the backdrop of the introduction of a document that is represented to be an answer to the need of Americans for health care. Certainly the document is one that is being proposed by those who believe that there is a need.

I might offer to say that there may be a need to improve some aspects of existing coverage, which has worked so well under the Affordable Care Act. And, yes, to those opponents of the Affordable Care Act, I would be pleased to debate you that, in fact, it has worked well.

It has worked well because 30 million Americans have insurance. It has worked well because 150 million Americans have guaranteed health benefits. It has worked well because low-income Americans have access if they are able to come under the expanded Medicare to health care. It has worked well because of young people being on the insurance of their families to the age of 26. That was first on the Affordable Care Act. It has worked well because we can provide for the preexisting condition, for you to be able to have insurance. We can provide for no caps on your insurance, and also payments to hospitals for uncompensated care. We can provide for that because of the mandate and the tax subsidies that go to the people to allow them to secure the insurance that they would desire.

There are certainly ways that we look to improve, and it would be nice if we had bipartisan cooperation to do that. But now we have a document that it is important for the American people to know that the question of how many people will lose coverage has not been answered. How many people will be covered has not been answered by this new document that pretends to respond to the healthcare needs of Americans. There is no documentation as to what the quality of the coverage will be. And to those listening who are concerned about the financial fiscal responsibility of this country and this Congress, no one knows the cost of this insurance.

So I would make the argument that we have a real problem and that there is a document that is supposed to be marked up as a healthcare bill for which the Republicans have not received any response from CBO. Let me indicate that when Democrats were seeking to work with Republicans in 2009, we had a CBO estimate before our markup began. Certainly, a request was made by Republicans about the bill; and, interestingly enough, they asked about coverage, and they asked about quality and cost.

We know that it is almost certain that Americans will lose coverage under this new document. We also know that jobs will be lost. We also know that in my State of Texas, very much is dependent or concerned, if you will, with rural hospitals, that rural hospitals will suffer greatly by the loss if it happens—and we hope not—of the Affordable Care Act, because rural hospitals and the rural communities throughout Texas will be devastated.

We also know that, with the mandate going away, the tax subsidies will be going not to people where they should be so that you can provide for your insurance as we understand it—this document is still a mystery—but it will be going to insurance companies. And we also know that, if you are 50 and older, it will cost some five times more than if you are younger. A heavy burden on working Americans, with no explanation. We know that the cost is going up and that you may be paying an amount that continues to go up every month.

Let me be very clear. We are trying to get the answers, but it makes for a very difficult process of getting the answers for a bill that has just been released in the last 24 hours, and, in actuality, no one knows really what is in it, and it will then go to committee to be marked up.

In my State of Texas, almost 2 million—1,874,000—individuals in the State who have gained coverage since the Affordable Care Act was implemented would lose their coverage if the Affordable Care Act is entirely or partially repealed.

Mr. Speaker, 1,092,650 individuals stand to lose their coverage if we dismantle the exchanges which allow people to access insurance companies all over the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, 913,177 individuals in the State of Texas who received financial assistance to purchase health insurance in 2016 and received an average of $271 per person would risk having coverage become unaffordable because they would not get that money anymore. That money would go to insurance companies.

Let me also say that 1,107,000 individuals in the State could have insurance if the State of Texas additionally would have accepted the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion. I can tell you that States like Kentucky understand the full impact of the Medicaid expansion, and they do not want to see it go away.

Mr. Speaker, 508,000 children have regained coverage since the ACA has been implemented, and they will lose their insurance.

Mr. Speaker, 205,000 young adults, as I have indicated, in the State would be able to stay on their parents' insurance. We don't know if that is clear because we really don't know the funding structure of this new document that has now been thrown to the American people.

We know that 646,415 individuals in the State who received cost share reductions to lower out-of-pocket costs, such as deductibles, copays, and coinsurance, are now simply at risk. We are all at risk. We are all, frankly, at risk. So I would have to ask the question: What does this plan really do to help America?

We know that 10,278,005 individuals in the State of Texas who now have private health insurance that covers preventative services without copays, coinsurance, or deductibles may lose these benefits if the Affordable Care Act goes. Women in the State who can now purchase insurance for the same price as men, eliminating the disparities that occurred before 2009 and 2010, may be at risk again for having to pay more money for their insurance—the actual disparity in health care being totally eliminated—and insurance companies being able to charge women more than their male counterparts.

Roughly, 4 million individuals in the State with preexisting diseases may, in fact, not have that because what is the basis of the financial structure that can pay to ensure that those with preexisting diseases in this new document called health care, whether there will be any money to cover those individuals with preexisting diseases, we don't even know that. I think that is something important to note.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, because this is a mysterious bill, we know that it will mostly benefit the rich. Households at the top of the U.S. income ladder would see taxes on their wages and investments drop under this bill. No one has anything against our friends that are doing quite well, but it will be on the backs of working Americans.

The Republican plan to replace ObamaCare includes a tax break for insurance company executives making over half a million dollars a year. What a great gift. We are about to approach Easter, a time of sacrifice, and Passover, and isn't it interesting that what we would be facing is a gift in this tax season of a great tax break of our friends making over $500,000 a year. Meanwhile, working Americans would lose coverage and be forced to pay more for less.

According to CNN, most healthcare experts agree that millions of Americans are likely to lose their coverage under this new document that is to reflect health care. Mothers: likely to make maternity coverage, among other services, immensely expensive, if available at all.

In fact, I recall certainly as a young mother that one of the most frightening things is to not have insurance or the kind of complete coverage that one needs with expectancy of the birth of a child. Not knowing what may happen to the mother during birth, what challenges the new baby may face, and to face the uncertainty of not having full maternity coverage is devastating.

Seniors, pregnant women, and children on Medicaid, under the Medicaid expansion, which has been adopted in 31 States and Washington, D.C., more

than half of the 50 States would shut down at the end of 2019. So you would get a few more years, and then hard-working Americans would be thrown off into the street in 31 States, including Washington, D.C. Women, seniors, children, in particular pregnant women, would see their health care thrown to the wind, extinguished, burned up.

The bill also proposes a major overhaul of Medicaid, a Federal State program covering more than 70 million low-income and disabled Americans. I believe that the proposal is to block grant Medicaid dollars under the pretense of letting States be creative.

I want Americans and my colleagues to understand what creativity means. Creativity simply means that they will do everything they can to shorten and cheapen the health benefits that you will get. And it will be made through deals, how little money can we spend, whether we can use the Medicaid block grant dollars for some other things, a wish list that we may want in the State that we come from, the 31 States, plus Washington, D.C.

Instead of the current open-ended Federal entitlement, States would get capped payment block grants based on the number of Medicaid enrollees. Block grants, basically. And when it runs out, you are in a whole world of trouble. Or, as we say, you are up the river without a paddle—you are up the river without a paddle. No one comes to your rescue when you are up the river without a paddle.

Seniors who have worked so hard who are on Medicare will have fiscal problems themselves. It will exacerbate the fiscal problems of Medicare by hastening the exhaustion of the program's trust fund by 4 years. Our commitment is to ensure that the Medicare trust fund clearly is strong, solid, and solvent. Whenever I meet with my seniors, I tell them my commitment—strong, solid, and solvent. But with this document called health care, we are in jeopardy.

So it is clearly a problem, and it certainly is not gathering support in unanimity on the other side. Mr. Speaker, someone is complaining about it. It happens to be Republicans, so it looks like it is going to be a rough road.

But my concluding remark, Mr. Speaker, is that this document that represents itself as a healthcare answer has so many problems, so many people will suffer, so much loss, that I ask my colleagues to reject this legislation as it is presently constructed, and I look forward to working to better health care for all Americans.

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

□ 2145

TOPICS OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) until 10 p.m.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I was handed a letter by a lady when I was at one of the many events that I attended in my district. It is how I stay in touch with what is going on. This lady says: ''U.S. Congressman LOUIE GOHMERT: I am a 52-year-old widow. ObamaCare is a major financial problem for me. Someone needs to fix the healthcare system. One-third of the money I get from my deceased husband's retirement fund is given to health care. My deductible alone is $7,000.''

She has an exclamation point.

''I am angry with the government deciding how I should spend what little money I have. I had to get a part-time job just to put gas in my car. So I clean tables and I mop floors. I am physically unable to work full time. I am frustrated with the fact I had to move back in with my parents just to make ends meet. Would you like that? Fulfilling. Could or would you do something to relieve this burden?''

That is from a 52-year-old widow in my district. That is what we have done with the burden, ObamaCare. We here in Congress decided: You know what? We are going to tell people like this widow how she has to spend what little money she has left. We are going to force this woman to go clean tables and mop floors when she is physically unable to work full time because we here in Washington have decided we know better than she does. So we have every right in Congress to force people like this dear widow to get on her hands and knees to work for the United States Congress. Pay your taxes and now, that is not enough. We are going to tell you that you are being forced to spend your money on health care that will never help you a dime because you have a $7,000 deductible.

Or how about hearing, 2 weeks ago, from a friend, one of those who was cut because of financial troubles. They had 100 employees. They can't afford the ObamaCare, so they have cut their 100 to 70, and they are continuing to work to get down to 49. Why? Because of ObamaCare. So we have already had 30 breadwinners, men and women, lose their jobs because of one thing: ObamaCare.

And now there are going to be 21 more who lose their jobs because of one thing: ObamaCare. They have got to get it under 50 so they don't have to keep paying such ridiculous prices for health insurance that has such high deductibles nobody will ever benefit.

Who is benefiting? Well, it can't be all of the health insurance companies because they have dropped out. They can't make money. So it has to be the government that is making all the money from this ObamaCare program.

A single mom told me she had been working at McDonald's making ends meet, but because of ObamaCare, they cut her hours back. Now she has to work at both McDonald's and Burger King, and she was in tears because it is just too much.

And why is she having to do it? Because people right here in this House and the other body, without one Republican vote in this body, told America: Too bad. You are not working enough at McDonald's. We want to make your life miserable. We are going to make you work at two places part time just like this widow that we condemned to start scrubbing tables and floors because the Democrats in this body, without a single Republican vote, decided we know better what you need to do with your time and your money than you do.

So it is a problem of arrogance when Washington thinks it knows so much better than people across the country. And yes, I know, I represent the 26 percent that didn't vote for me. I understand that. And I have heard from them, and I don't need a townhall to know they are for keeping this albatross of a healthcare system. The ACA is not affordable, though. It is ridiculous to call it affordable care.

One of the problems is, when you have to take precious healthcare dollars that used to go to providing care in a hospital, in a clinic, for a patient, now it goes to government navigators. Why? Because there were union officials that decided: We have lost too many union members. The unions that are growing are the government unions, the very ones that Franklin Roosevelt said you should never have a union composed of government workers.

Think about it. You are working for the people of the United States of America. Why would you need a union to organize against the people? Sounds un-American. But those are the ones that are growing. And union leaders, without concern for their members, decided: Let's embrace as many aliens as we can get into the country, legally or otherwise, because they will join the union and that will grow our ranks; and we as union leaders will be better off, but our members' wages will continue to go down, our members will continue to lose jobs. But, gee, we may have more people in our union.

We know that there was supposed to be thousands of new IRS agents hired so that they could help enforce ObamaCare. It is a travesty. The bill that has been filed is not going to do it, but, hopefully, our Republican leadership will be willing to work things out and not prevent good amendments that will make it palatable so enough of us can vote for it.

I have gotten to know President Trump a bit, and I feel like he wants the best deal he can get for America. If this bill were the best he could get, he would probably have to live with that, but we can do a whole lot better. Some of us are determined we are not going to vote for one that doesn't.

In the meantime, there is so much talk by President Obama and all of his minions that are still out there trying to undermine the Trump administration. We have a crisis here in Congress

that people are not talking about. I keep bringing it up. Doesn't seem to be a lot of folks who want to talk about it.

There was a time when we had mainstream media that actually did research, asked questions, dug to the bottom of things. But there are IT—information technology, mainly working with computers—employees, shared employees for several Democrats that are under investigation. Imran Awan was the company owner. Abid Awan, Jamal Awan, Hina Alvi—the wife of Imran Awan—and Natalia Sova, wife of Abid Awan, each made $160,000 a year as IT-shared employees working on computers for various Democrats in the House of Representatives.

The Awan brothers are of Pakistani descent, but their immigration status is unclear. There are a lot of things that are unknown about the Awan brothers. But they worked for our former DNC chair, DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ—that is Imran Awan. These people are under investigation for stealing material, potentially accessing material they shouldn't have, for taking material off of Capitol Hill and stealing it, using it in other places.

We are told, oh, not to worry, they didn't access classified intelligence information in the SCIF; but other IT people tell me, once someone is in the congressional system, the calendar, email for one Member of Congress, if they are good, it is not that hard to break into lots of other Members of Congress' email and calendars.

What country that hates America—some that like America—wouldn't love to know who people are meeting, especially on the Intelligence Committee like some of the people that have employed these?

Some of them, very fine members of things like the Ethics Committee, Judiciary, Foreign Affairs, Intelligence Committee. Let's see, ANDRÉ CARSON, SANDY LEVIN, JACKIE SPEIER—a lot of people, good people—TIM RYAN. A lot of these folks, they employed these folks. They were very trusting, kind people. And these people didn't have a background check, and now they are under investigation. I heard some have been told that Imran Awan, the lead guy, went back to Pakistan.

Well, if this guy set up and was working on computer systems, is it possible he could have—and this is what a normal mainstream reporter, 30, 40 years ago back in the seventies would have asked: Well, did he set up the DNC computer system that got hacked, that was supposedly hacked by Russians or others, did he set that up so it could be hacked? I mean, there is a lot here going on that we don't know the answers to, and we deserve to know the answers.

There were mortgage transfers, debt evading bankruptcies. Imran Awan, Jamal Awan were known to be the ringleaders of the group, had been providing services since 2005; has convictions for driving offenses which were serious enough to become criminal misdemeanors, used an illegal radar detector, drove an unregistered vehicle; some say, after masterminding the family's finances, was running the business completely by 2010 and instructed Abid not to even speak to anyone.

The wives of Imran and Abid also began receiving paychecks from the House of Representatives. They purchased two homes in Lorton in 2008, one of which was associated with all three brothers at one time. Alvi sold that home in 2016 to the younger brother Jamal for $620,000.

Imran owned a home and put it in his father's name in 2008 in Springfield. Abid later claimed, in bankruptcy, that the house was his.

Jamal Awan was placed on the House payroll at age 20, making $160,000.

Imran is also a real estate agent. Despite making $160,000 in congressional salaries, debts went unpaid by the Awan brothers, including debts to the Congressional Federal Credit Union.

$100,000 was taken from a known Hezbollah-connected fugitive, a fugitive from the FBI; and they are associated with this Hezbollah-connected agent, and there is no press out there getting to the bottom of it? What happened to the Washington press, the proud press of Washington of the 1970s? Well, they are in the bag for one party. They are not interested in getting to the bottom of the news. They are all about advocating.

God not just bless America, God help America. We have got to have people wake up before we do much more damage to ourselves. It is time to turn this country around, and one of the things we should start with is getting to the bottom of this investigation; find out how much damage these alleged criminals did from Pakistan to our Congress, and also start undoing the damage ObamaCare has done so people can get jobs again they have lost, so people can have health care that has deductibles they can afford. It is time to make America great again.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of illness.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, March 8, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

718. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Gastroenterology-Urology Devices; Manual Gastroenterology-Urology Surgical Instruments and Accessories [Docket No.: FDA-2016-N-4661] received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

719. A letter from the Assistant Administrator, Diversion Control Division, DEA, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of 10 Synthetic Cathinones Into Schedule I [Docket No.: DEA-436] received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

720. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — 340B Drug Pricing Program Ceiling Price and Manufacturer Civil Monetary Penalties; Delay of Effective Date (RIN: 0906-AA89) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

721. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting certification that no United Nations agency or United Nations affiliated agency grants any official status, accreditation, or recognition to any organization which promotes and condones or seeks the legalization of pedophilia, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 287e note; Public Law 103-236, Sec. 102(g) (as amended by Public Law 103-415, Sec. 1(o)); (108 Stat. 4301); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

722. A letter from the Assistant Legal Adviser, Office of Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report concerning international agreements other than treaties entered into by the United States to be transmitted to the Congress within the sixty-day period specified in the Case-Zablocki Act, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); Public Law 92-403, Sec. 1(a) (as amended by Public Law 108-458, Sec. 7121(b)); (118 Stat. 3807); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

723. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting notification that on December 20, 2016, under Sec. 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, for the Government of Kuwait, Transmittal No. 16-40 will be changed to Transmittal No. 16-41, as of the above date, and will be referred to as such in all future documentation, to include publishing in the Federal Register; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

724. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report on the programs or projects of the International Atomic Energy Agency; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

725. A letter from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's Freedom of Information Act 2016 Litigation and Compliance Report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(F)(ii)(II); Public Law 89-554, Sec. 5(ii)(II) (as added by Public Law 110-175, Sec. 5); (121 Stat. 2526); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

726. A letter from the Associate General Counsel, Department of Agriculture, transmitting twelve notices of vacancies, designation of acting officer, or discontinuation of service in acting role, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3349(a); Public Law 105-277, 151(b); (112 Stat. 2681-614); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

727. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Pacific Island Pelagic Fisheries; 2016 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Bigeye Tuna Fishery; Closure [Docket No.: 151023986-6763-02] (RIN: 0648-XE284) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

728. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 150916863-6211-02] (RIN: 0648-XF109) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

729. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Inseason Adjustment to the 2016 Gulf of Alaska Pollock Seasonal Apportionments [Docket No.: 150818742-6210-02] (RIN: 0648-XE958) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

730. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Groundfish by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 150818742-6210-02] (RIN: 0648-XF007) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

731. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries [Docket No.: 150121066-5717-02] (RIN: 0648-XE930) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

732. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Exchange of Flatfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 150916863-6211-02] (RIN: 0648-XE935) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

733. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries; 2016 General Category Fishery [Docket No.: 150121066-5717-02] (RIN: 0648-XF011) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

734. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Shortraker Rockfish in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 150818742-6210-02] (RIN: 0648-XE897) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

735. A letter from the Director, Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustments; Annual Adjustments (RIN: 1076-AF35) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

736. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — IFR Altitudes; Miscellaneous Amendments; Part 95 Instrument Flight Rules [Docket No.: 31120; Amdt. No.: 531] received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

737. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Alexander Schleicher, GmbH & Co. Gliders [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9382; Directorate Identifier 2016-CE-032-AD; Amendment 39-18790; AD 2017-02-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

738. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2016-7415; Directorate Identifier 2015-SW-076-AD; Amendment 39-18786; AD 2017-02-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

739. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-5040; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-192-AD; Amendment 39-18787; AD 2017-02-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

740. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company [Docket No.: FAA-2016-6427; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-200-AD; Amendment 39-18770; AD 2017-01-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

741. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-7261; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-004-AD; Amendment 39-18783; AD 2017-02-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

742. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Piper Aircraft, Inc. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0045; Directorate Identifier 2017-CE-002-AD; Amendment 39-18785; AD 2017-02-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

743. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-8186; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-074-AD; Amendment 39-18784; AD 2017-02-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

744. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9050; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-086-AD; Amendment 39-18788; AD 2017-02-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

745. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-6670; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-006-AD; Amendment 39-18789; AD 2017-02-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

746. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0571; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-059-AD; Amendment 39-18782; AD 2017-02-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

747. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-6430; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-176-AD; Amendment 39-18781; AD 2017-02-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

748. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; PILATUS AIRCRAFT LTD. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-7003; Directorate Identifier 2016-CE-015-AD; Amendment 39-18766; AD 2016-26-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 2, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110

Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

749. A letter from the Attorney, Office of the Chief Counsel for Trade Enforcement and Compliance, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Steel Import Monitoring and Analysis System (RIN: 0625-AB09) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

750. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — 2017 Calendar Year Resident Population Figures [Notice 2017-19] received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

751. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Safe Harbor for Service Agreements providing electricity to Federal Government generated by solar equipment (Rev. Proc. 2017-19) received March 3, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. SHUSTER: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 375. A bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the ''Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse'' (Rept. 115–23). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. SHUSTER: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 1174. A bill to provide a lactation room in public buildings (Rept. 115–24). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GOODLATTE: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 985. A bill to amend the procedures used in Federal court class actions and multidistrict litigation proceedings to assure fairer, more efficient outcomes for claimants and defendants, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–25). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Ms. CHENEY: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 174. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1301) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–26). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. BUCK: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 175. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 725) to amend title 28, United States Code, to prevent fraudulent joinder (Rept. 115–27). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. POCAN, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. RICHMOND, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. EVANS, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Ms. LEE, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. COHEN, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. BEYER, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SOTO, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. NADLER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. TONKO, and Mr. SHERMAN):

H.R. 1374. A bill to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts (for herself and Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia):

H.R. 1375. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Secretary of Health of Human Services to award grants to States (or collaborations of States) to establish, expand, or maintain a comprehensive regional, State, or municipal system to provide training, education, consultation, and other resources to prescribers relating to patient pain, substance misuse, and substance abuse disorders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CUMMINGS:

H.R. 1376. A bill to amend title 44, United States Code, to require preservation of certain electronic records by Federal agencies, to require a certification and reports relating to Presidential records, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. HARPER:

H.R. 1377. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to better align certain provisions of such Act with Federal disability laws and policies intended to remove societal and institutional barriers to employment opportunities for people with disabilities; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. HARPER:

H.R. 1378. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of doctors of chiropractic in the National Health Service Corps scholarship and loan repayment programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. WALZ, Mr. MAST, and Mr. BERGMAN):

H.R. 1379. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the entitlement to educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs for members of the Armed Forces awarded the Purple Heart; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. DELBENE (for herself, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. KILMER, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. SCHRADER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. WELCH, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mr. HARPER):

H.R. 1380. A bill to clarify research and development for wood products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 1381. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to permit States to impose an individual responsibility requirement for nondisabled, nonelderly, nonpregnant individuals made eligible for medical assistance; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. WEBER of Texas (for himself, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, and Mr. BYRNE):

H.R. 1382. A bill to establish requirements and restrictions for the commercial, charter, and recreational red snapper fishing seasons in the Gulf of Mexico for the 2017 and 2018 fishing seasons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BACON (for himself, Mr. DUNN, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. TAYLOR):

H.R. 1383. A bill to direct certain actions of the United States Government with respect to recognizing the service and sacrifice of veterans of the Korean Constabulary, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, and Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PALAZZO (for himself, Mr. WALZ, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona):

H.R. 1384. A bill to amend titles 5, 10, 37, and 38 of the United States Code to ensure that an order to serve on active duty under section 12304a and 12304b of title 10, United States Code, is treated the same as other orders to serve on active duty for determining the eligibility of members of the uniformed services and veterans for certain benefits and for calculating the deadlines for certain benefits; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. FOXX:

H.R. 1385. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to limit recruitment and retention bonuses for employees who spend certain durations of time on official time, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. KATKO (for himself, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mrs. COMSTOCK):

H.R. 1386. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a pilot program to assess the operational benefits of remote air traffic control towers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ (for himself, Mr. MEADOWS, Ms. FOXX, Mr. MESSER, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. HARRIS, and Mr. DESANTIS):

H.R. 1387. A bill to reauthorize the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. O'HALLERAN:

H.R. 1388. A bill to enact House Resolution 895, One Hundred Tenth Congress, (establishing the Office of Congressional Ethics) into permanent law; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 1389. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with

flexibility to provide care coordination under Medicaid for the most vulnerable through managed care; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BANKS of Indiana (for himself, Mr. MESSER, Mr. BUDD, and Mrs. RADEWAGEN):

H.R. 1390. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay costs relating to the transportation of certain deceased veterans to veterans' cemeteries owned by a State or tribal organization; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BANKS of Indiana:

H.R. 1391. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide educational and vocational counseling for veterans on campuses of institutions of higher learning, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BERA (for himself, Mr. KILMER, Mr. SOTO, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. HIMES, and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 1392. A bill to establish a National TechCorps program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BISHOP of Michigan (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. WALKER, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. MESSER, Mr. HURD, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. MCCAUL, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. COOPER, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. THOMAS J. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. MARINO, Mrs. WALORSKI, and Mr. CRIST):

H.R. 1393. A bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana (for herself, Mr. COLLINS of New York, and Mr. GUTHRIE):

H.R. 1394. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with flexibility with respect to providing coverage for nonemergency transportation under Medicaid; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BURGESS (for himself, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. MULLIN):

H.R. 1395. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to improve the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CICILLINE (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. COHEN, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H.R. 1396. A bill to restore statutory rights to the people of the United States from forced arbitration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. COMSTOCK:

H.R. 1397. A bill to authorize, direct, facilitate, and expedite the transfer of administrative jurisdiction of certain Federal land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CONNOLLY (for himself and Mr. LANGEVIN):

H.R. 1398. A bill to provide funds to give States incentives to invest in practices and technology designed to expedite voting at the polls and simplify voter registration, improve voting system security, and promote automatic voter registration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. COOK (for himself, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. HIMES, Mr. VALADAO, Ms. CHENEY, Mr. YODER, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. COSTA, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi):

H.R. 1399. A bill to reduce temporarily the royalty required to be paid for sodium produced on Federal lands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CRAWFORD (for himself, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. WESTERMAN, and Mr. HILL):

H.R. 1400. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to authorize agricultural producers to establish and contribute to tax-exempt farm risk management accounts; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida (for himself and Mr. CRIST):

H.R. 1401. A bill to ensure fairness in premium rates for coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program for residences and business properties, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. GABBARD (for herself and Ms. HANABUSA):

H.R. 1402. A bill to amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to provide for a macadamia tree health initiative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico (for herself, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Mr. SERRANO):

H.R. 1403. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the deduction for income attributable to domestic production activities in Puerto Rico; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRIJALVA:

H.R. 1404. A bill to provide for the conveyance of certain land inholdings owned by the United States to the Tucson Unified School District and to the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRIJALVA (for himself, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. VELA, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, and Mr. BLUMENAUER):

H.R. 1405. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a veterans visa program to permit veterans who have been removed from the United States to return as immigrants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, and Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HASTINGS (for himself, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. TROTT, and Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 1406. A bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to prohibit the slaughter of dogs and cats for human consumption; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. HUNTER:

H.R. 1407. A bill to establish a strategic materials investment fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, Foreign Affairs, and Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ISSA:

H.R. 1408. A bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the health care-related provisions in the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 and to amend title 5, United States Code, to offer Federal employee health benefits plans to individuals who are not Federal employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Oversight and Government Reform, Education and the Workforce, Natural Resources, the Judiciary, Appropriations, House Administration, and Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LANCE (for himself, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. HARPER, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. PINGREE, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. KING of New York, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. LONG, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. FLORES, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. LATTA, Mr. MACARTHUR, and Mr. KILMER):

H.R. 1409. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to require group and individual health insurance coverage and group health plans to provide for cost sharing for oral anticancer drugs on terms no less favorable than the cost sharing provided for anticancer medications administered by a health care provider; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. MCSALLY (for herself and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H.R. 1410. A bill to establish responsibility for the International Outfall Interceptor; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself and Mr. LOBIONDO):

H.R. 1411. A bill to continue in effect for the 2017 and 2018 fishing seasons certain fishing specifications for the summer flounder fishery, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD:

H.R. 1412. A bill to establish a commission to study the removal of Mexican-Americans to Mexico during 1929-1941, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Ms. PINGREE):

H.R. 1413. A bill to provide for a grants program to develop and enhance integrated nutrition and physical activity curricula in medical schools; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SHERMAN (for himself, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. RASKIN, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 1414. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act and the Electronic Fund Transfer Act to provide justice to victims of fraud; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself and Mr. MEEKS):

H.R. 1415. A bill to facilitate effective research on and treatment of neglected tropical diseases, including Ebola, through coordinated domestic and international efforts; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TIBERI (for himself, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri):

H.R. 1416. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income contributions to the capital of a partnership, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself and Mr. MCCLINTOCK):

H.R. 1417. A bill to amend the National Law Enforcement Museum Act to allow the Museum to acquire, receive, possess, collect, ship, transport, import, and display firearms, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 1418. A bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Alexander Creek, Alaska, is and shall be recognized as an eligible Native village under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. YOUNG of Iowa (for himself, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. JONES, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio):

H.R. 1419. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the award of a military service medal to members of the Armed Forces who served honorably during the Cold War, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. HARPER:

H. Res. 173. A resolution providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Ms. LEE (for herself, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. CHABOT):

H. Res. 176. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. RICHMOND:

H. Res. 177. A resolution expressing support for the designation of Clergy Spouse Appreciation Day; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia:

H.R. 1374.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 18 allows congress to make all laws ''which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution''

By Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts:

H.R. 1375.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CUMMINGS:

H.R. 1376.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States grants the Congress the power to enact this law.

By Mr. HARPER:

H.R. 1377.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 18

By Mr. HARPER:

H.R. 1378.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress enacts this bill pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PETERS:

H.R. 1379.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Ms. DELBENE:

H.R. 1380.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 1381.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. WEBER of Texas:

H.R. 1382.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Commerce clause under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

''To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.''

By Mr. BACON:

H.R. 1383.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article One, Section 8

By Mr. PALAZZO:

H.R. 1384.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. FOXX:

H.R. 1385.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18—

''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. KATKO:

H.R. 1386.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CHAFFETZ:

H.R. 1387.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 17 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. O'HALLERAN:

H.R. 1388.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. BILIRAKIS:

H.R. 1389.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BANKS of Indiana:

H.R. 1390.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. BANKS of Indiana:

H.R. 1391.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. BERA:

H.R. 1392.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution

By Mr. BISHOP of Michigan:

H.R. 1393.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Commerce Clause, Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana:

H.R. 1394.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 1395.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, which grants Congress the power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution, which grants Congress the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.

By Mr. CICILLINE:

H.R. 1396.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 3.

By Mrs. COMSTOCK:

H.R. 1397.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States provides that ''The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States . . .''

By Mr. CONNOLLY:

H.R. 1398.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 4 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. COOK:

H.R. 1399.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. CRAWFORD:

H.R. 1400.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

GENERAL WELFARE CLAUSE. Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power to ''lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common defense and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida:

H.R. 1401.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Claus 1, Section 8, Article 1

By Ms. GABBARD:

H.R. 1402.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution including Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 (General Welfare Clause) and Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 (Necessary and Proper Clause)

By Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico:

H.R. 1403.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV Section III of the U.S. Constitution: The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States

By Mr. GRIJALVA:

H.R. 1404.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Const. art. I, §8, cl. 3.

By Mr. GRIJALVA:

H.R. 1405.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Const. art. I, §§1 and 8.

By Mr. HASTINGS:

H.R. 1406.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. HUNTER:

H.R. 1407.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 8 Section 18: To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or officer thereof.

By Mr. ISSA:

H.R. 1408.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3: To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.

By Mr. LANCE:

H.R. 1409.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1, of the United States Constitution, Congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.

By Ms. MCSALLY:

H.R. 1410.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3—To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. PALLONE:

H.R. 1411.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD:

H.R. 1412.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Clause 4, Section 4

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio:

H.R. 1413.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. SHERMAN:

H.R. 1414.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I , Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 1415.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. TIBERI:

H.R. 1416.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 1417.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 & Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2

''The Congress shall have power To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

''The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.''

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 1418.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. YOUNG of Iowa:

H.R. 1419.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 38: Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. STEWART, and Mr. LUCAS.

H.R. 82: Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 203: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 227: Mr. TED LIEU of California.

H.R. 233: Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 291: Mr. COSTA.

H.R. 299: Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. NOLAN, Mrs. ROBY, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. YOHO, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mrs. HARTZLER, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. TIPTON, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, and Mr. HARPER.

H.R. 303: Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 305: Mr. SARBANES, Mr. NADLER, and Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 351: Mr. FERGUSON.

H.R. 367: Mr. ARRINGTON.

H.R. 369: Mr. TIPTON.

H.R. 371: Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 389: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LAMALFA, and Mr. JONES.

H.R. 392: Mr. EMMER, Mr. FLORES, Mr. DENT, Mr. LANCE, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. EVANS, and Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER.

H.R. 448: Mr. SHERMAN and Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 477: Mr. ROSS.

H.R. 484: Ms. NORTON and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 502: Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. NADLER, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. KIND, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. MOULTON, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. EVANS, Mr. RUIZ, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. RUSH, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. COSTA, and Mr. GARRETT.

H.R. 510: Mr. GARAMENDI.

H.R. 530: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 544: Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 553: Mrs. BLACK and Mrs. WALORSKI.

H.R. 564: Mr. MASSIE.

H.R. 625: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. KEATING, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, and Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.

H.R. 630: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 664: Mr. EVANS.

H.R. 721: Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. HECK, Mr. ROSS, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. Carter of Georgia, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. BARR, Mr. COLE, Mr. PERRY, and Mr. LUCAS.

H.R. 747: Mr. PALLONE, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. GALLAGHER, Ms. CHENEY, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. NORCROSS, and Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 749: Mr. CRIST.

H.R. 757: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MENG, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KHANNA, and Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 781: Mr. DUNN.

H.R. 785: Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. TIPTON, and Mr. LUCAS.

H.R. 810: Ms. NORTON, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. DEUTCH, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.

H.R. 816: Mr. MAST, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, and Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 821: Mr. EVANS.

H.R. 830: Mrs. TORRES, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.R. 846: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. POE of Texas, and Mr. NEAL.

H.R. 849: Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia.

H.R. 878: Mr. ARRINGTON.

H.R. 909: Mr. LANCE.

H.R. 914: Ms. BONAMICI and Mr. DESAULNIER.

H.R. 919: Mr. GARAMENDI and Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 931: Mr. LYNCH, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr.

FITZPATRICK, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Ms. DELBENE, and Mr. RASKIN.

H.R. 942: Ms. JACKSON LEE.

H.R. 947: Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 949: Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 959: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, and Mr. DEFAZIO.

H.R. 970: Ms. LEE and Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 976: Mr. DELANEY.

H.R. 989: Mr. MARINO.

H.R. 990: Mr. MARINO.

H.R. 1001: Mr. ENGEL.

H.R. 1005: Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 1027: Mr. KHANNA, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 1031: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas and Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.

H.R. 1049: Mr. GARAMENDI.

H.R. 1057: Mr. FASO, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. YODER, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. DESAULNIER.

H.R. 1072: Mr. MASSIE.

H.R. 1090: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. LANCE, and Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 1094: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. COHEN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. EVANS, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. BUTTERFIELD.

H.R. 1098: Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. ELLISON, and Ms. DELBENE.

H.R. 1109: Mr. OLSON and Mr. MCKINLEY.

H.R. 1121: Mr. BUCHANAN and Mr. BACON.

H.R. 1136: Mr. STIVERS, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. MULLIN, and Mr. HUIZENGA.

H.R. 1148: Mr. HARPER, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. BARR, Mr. COLE, and Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 1160: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 1163: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico and Mr. O'HALLERAN.

H.R. 1164: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, and Mr. MCKINLEY.

H.R. 1179: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, Mr. NUNES, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. COOK, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. BLUM, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.

H.R. 1206: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 1227: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr. AMASH.

H.R. 1242: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 1243: Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. MOORE, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 1245: Mr. ELLISON, Mr. O'ROURKE, and Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 1251: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1257: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, and Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 1267: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.

H.R. 1281: Mr. LANCE, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. TONKO, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 1287: Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 1291: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 1296: Mr. STIVERS.

H.R. 1302: Mr. GARRETT and Mr. KEATING.

H.R. 1304: Mr. MITCHELL.

H.R. 1310: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 1313: Ms. STEFANIK and Mr. MITCHELL.

H.R. 1318: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.

H.R. 1328: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 1329: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 1339: Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 1341: Ms. SLAUGHTER and Mr. RENACCI.

H.R. 1361: Ms. ESTY, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 1362: Mr. SABLAN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. CHABOT, Ms. GABBARD, and Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 1368: Mr. POLIS and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 1372: Mr. DONOVAN.

H.J. Res. 6: Mr. MARSHALL.

H.J. Res. 9: Mr. DUNN.

H.J. Res. 17: Mr. ROTHFUS and Mrs. WALORSKI.

H.J. Res. 59: Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. TIBERI, and Mr. LUCAS.

H.J. Res. 72: Mr. BANKS of Indiana and Mr. BRAT.

H.J. Res. 73: Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, and Mr. COLE.

H.J. Res. 75: Ms. LEE and Mr. CLEAVER.

H. Con. Res. 10: Mrs. WALORSKI.

H. Con. Res. 13: Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, and Mr. MITCHELL.

H. Con. Res. 20: Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. SUOZZI, and Mr. CICILLINE.

H. Res. 15: Mr. CORREA, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. SCHRADER, Ms. LEE, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. CALVERT, Ms. GABBARD, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. SOTO, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. DEGETTE, and Ms. ESHOO.

H. Res. 30: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. BACON, and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.

H. Res. 92: Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. HASTINGS, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. RUSH, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. GALLAGHER.

H. Res. 104: Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H. Res. 124: Mr. WESTERMAN.

H. Res. 128: Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. NOLAN, and Mr. EMMER.

H. Res. 132: Ms. LEE.

H. Res. 135: Mr. COLLINS of New York and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H. Res. 143: Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California.

H. Res. 154: Mr. BUTTERFIELD and Ms. TSONGAS.

H. Res. 162: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia and Mr. BARR.

H. Res. 164: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. COFFMAN, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. HASTINGS, and Mr. KEATING.

H. Res. 165: Mr. GRIJALVA.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MRS. BLACK

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on the Budget in H.R. 1301, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2017, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2017 *No. 39*

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord, in whose hands is the life of every living thing, we depend upon Your strength and might.

Manifest Yourself to our Senators, directing their steps and bringing them to Your chosen destination. Without Your leading, they will be like ships without rudders, but with You directing, they cannot fail to fulfill Your purposes. Take them in the direction that will enable them to positively affect the lives of the heavy laden, the sorrowful, and the suffering.

Fill their hearts with the deep compassion needed to enable Your Kingdom to come and Your will to be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Lord, use them to hasten the coming of Your Kingdom of justice and truth.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 7, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SASSE thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

REPEALING AND REPLACING OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last night, the committees of jurisdiction in the House released a proposal to repeal ObamaCare and begin the process of replacing it with commonsense reforms to preserve access and lower costs. The plan builds upon the 2015 repeal bill, which was vetoed by President Obama. I am happy to hear the committees will begin consideration this week. I encourage every Member to review it because I hope to call it up when we receive it from the House.

It is clear to just about everyone that ObamaCare is failing. Costs are soaring. Choices are diminishing. Insurance markets are teetering.

It would be easy to sit back and watch this partisan law collapse under its own weight. Pass the buck to the next guy. That seems to be the Democrats' strategy.

Republicans think the middle class actually deserves better. In election after election, Americans have called for relief. In election after election, Americans have called for an end to this partisan law. We promised to do both things. We are.

The legislation the House introduced last night represents the next step along that path. It is the result of a long conversation with many voices, and it is supported by the one person who can actually sign a bill into law—the President of the United States.

I want to recognize everyone for their contributions and hard work. Given last night's announcement, I especially want to commend our colleagues in the House. The policy conversation that led to what we saw last night continues. The policy process moves forward today.

We have come a long way. We have a lot further to go, but we are making significant progress. Working arm in arm with the House and the new administration, we are going to keep our promise to the American people because ObamaCare is a direct attack on the middle class. We all know it. We all get letters and phone calls. We hear the heartbreak and the frustration nearly every day.

Consider this letter from one of my constituents in Goshen, who wrote about the ObamaCare plan available to his family:

> I am extremely displeased with the limited choices available. While 16 plans are listed for me at the Healthcare.gov website, they are all inferior to my 2016 plan. Neither our primary care physician nor my rheumatologist is in network of any offered 2017 plan.
>
> The cost is another problem. The 2017 plan that I will probably choose will have a 20% higher premium than my 2016 plan with a lower level of benefits.

Pay more; pay more for less. That is ObamaCare for you right there. Look, in so many different ways, we have seen the evidence for years that ObamaCare simply isn't working. This isn't a law that can be fixed. This isn't a law that can be saved. It has to be repealed and replaced. We promised the American people we would do that. We are going to keep our promise.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT RESOLUTIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, for the past 8 years, Americans felt left behind by an economy that failed to live up to its potential, a job market that left too many behind, and a future that didn't seem to be as bright as it once had.

For too long, the previous administration pursued an agenda that put Washington's interests above the peoples' interests and regulations that too often followed ideology rather than facts. In fact, as we recently saw cited in a national paper, one study ''estimates that the costs of complying with federal rules and regulations totaled nearly $1.9 trillion in 2015.''

Let me say that again. The costs of complying with regulations in America totaled nearly $1.9 trillion in 2015, equal to about half the Federal budget.

Yet another study ''estimates that regulation has shaved 0.8 percent off the U.S. annual growth rate''—a growth rate that was already too low to begin with.

You can see the effect that heavy-handed regulations can have on our Nation's economy. There is no question that some regulations are necessary and even beneficial to our country, but Washington should assess the real impact regulations will have before implementing them.

Undoing the damage of the past several years is going to take some time, but fortunately there are meaningful steps we have already begun taking to bring relief. Just last night we took another step by blocking a sweeping labor regulation that would have threatened American businesses, workers, and taxpayers at large.

Today we will keep working to dial back even more harmful regulations, like the one before us now—the so-called BLM planning 2.0 rule. Don't let the name fool you. This regulation has little to do with improving current policy. Instead, it really represents another power grab pushed through by the Obama administration on its way out the door.

Like several other regulations we are working to address, this one adopts a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach. It shifts power away from State and local governments toward Washington bureaucrats, and it targets Western States specifically, jeopardizing their ability to manage the lands and resources that their local economies count on.

As Senator MURKOWSKI, chair of the Energy Committee, has pointed out, this regulation could negatively impact a range of activities like grazing, timber, energy, and mineral development and other important uses of public land that States like hers rely on. And, perhaps even more troubling, it would also limit input from local stakeholders who are the most familiar with these issues. That is why Senator MURKOWSKI has been fighting the BLM 2.0 regulation from the start and has introduced legislation under the Congressional Review Act to overturn it.

Later today, we will have the opportunity to vote on a similar resolution, which has already passed the House. It is another important step in our efforts to return power to the States and knock down barriers that keep our economy from growing.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CALLING FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A SPECIAL PROSECUTOR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning the Judiciary Committee will have a hearing on the nomination of Mr. Rod Rosenstein to serve as the Deputy Attorney General. During the hearing, Mr. Rosenstein should commit to naming a special prosecutor to look into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia.

There is a strong legal rationale for a special prosecutor. A special prosecutor, by the Department of Justice rules, would be free of day-to-day supervision by anyone at the Department of Justice, would be free to follow the investigation where it leads, and would be subject to an increased level of congressional oversight. Moreover, it is the right thing to do to ensure that this investigation remains impartial, nonpartisan, and truly gets to the bottom of the matter. The bottom line is very simple. The special prosecutor can only be fired for cause, but a line person in the Justice Department could be fired at will. We saw that happen when President Trump didn't like what Sally Yates said about his Executive order. He simply fired her.

Mr. Rosenstein is a very fine man, an excellent, longtime prosecutor in the Justice Department, but this is when we call for a special prosecutor. It is not an aspersion against him in any way. We are worried the White House will not let an investigation within the Justice Department, without the insulation of a special prosecutor, go forward.

So if Mr. Rosenstein is unwilling to commit to naming a special prosecutor or says he needs to be confirmed, and in his position he can make an assessment, that is insufficient. The need for a special prosecutor is clear enough today to make that call.

Of course, we don't need to wait for Mr. Rosenstein. Mr. Boente, the Acting Deputy Attorney General, can make the call today, but if neither will commit to a special prosecutor, Congress will have to consider bringing back a narrower independent counsel law to see that this investigation is conducted properly.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on another matter, last night we saw the House Republicans plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. After 70 years of talking about the same thing over and over again, you would think the Republicans would have been able to come up with a better plan than this. This plan is a mess.

First, it will cost average Americans more money for their healthcare, while providing fewer benefits; second, it will cut taxes for the very wealthy, making average Americans pay more for their healthcare; third, it will raise premiums and costs for older Americans; and, fourth, it will remove the guarantee that ensures Americans with pre-existing conditions can get coverage.

TrumpCare will make health insurance in America measurably worse in just about every way and leave more Americans uninsured. It does, however, greatly benefit the very wealthy and special interests. Let's quickly look at each of the items I just mentioned.

First, TrumpCare will cost more and you will get less. By eliminating minimum coverage for healthcare plans and decreasing the availability of tax credits, the cost for average Americans will increase by at least $1,000 annually. That is a huge increase, like a tax increase for average Americans who need healthcare. It cuts and caps Medicaid, which has expanded health insurance to over 20 million Americans, and affects poor people, as well as many elderly who are in nursing homes, as well as their children who might have to pay for their care with the kinds of cuts we are seeing.

The bill would greatly decrease coverage for maternity care, preventive screenings, mental health, opioid treatment, and more. With respect to women, TrumpCare would send us back to the Dark Ages. Gone are the protections for maternity care, mammograms, and more. Gone is all the funding next year for Planned Parenthood, where 2.5 million women a year get healthcare. The ACA finally made it

the case that you no longer had to pay more for coverage just because you are a woman. TrumpCare rips that away, undoes the progress we made just a few years ago.

Second, TrumpCare would be a boon to the wealthy, while making working Americans pay more. The bill is a winning lottery ticket for wealthy Americans. It removes an investment tax and a surcharge on the wealthiest Americans, folks with incomes of above $250,000 a year, saving them an average of $200,000 a year, and it allows a tax break for insurance executives making over $500,000 a year.

Third, TrumpCare will raise premiums and costs for older Americans. It would repeal the Affordable Care Act's premium subsidies and replace them with refundable tax credits that could be worth thousands of dollars less than what was provided under the ACA. Under this plan, a senior without Medicare might receive only $4,000 a year in tax credits, an inadequate sum for someone of that age. One illness or a bad break, and the value of their tax credit would evaporate. It also allows insurers to charge older Americans more simply because of their age.

Finally, TrumpCare would remove the guarantee of coverage for Americans with preexisting conditions. TrumpCare is breathtakingly irresponsible. It shifts the costs and the burdens from the rich to the poor and middle class, from the government to the people, and raises premiums on older Americans. It seems designed to cover fewer Americans and make that coverage less affordable and less generous. It seems designed to make America sick again.

We don't even know how large a negative impact this bill will have because Republicans are irresponsibly rushing forward before this bill even receives a score from the Congressional Budget Office.

After years of howling at the Moon, at Democrats for rushing through the Affordable Care Act, the mantra they said over and over again on the floor here and in the House was ''read the bill.'' Republicans are having committee votes 2 days after the bill is released.

No wonder they don't want anyone to know what is in the bill. They are rushing it through because it is very hard to defend what they have done, and the longer it is out there, the harder it is going to be for their colleagues, Republicans, to vote for it. Lawmakers will be voting blind, without a final analysis of how this bill will affect overall coverage and affordability. I know this affects a lot of my colleagues on the other side.

We have no knowledge of how this affects the deficit. It is removing a lot of the revenues for healthcare without replacing them. In all likelihood—we will see what CBO says—the deficit is going to go way up.

The President is already throwing his arms around this plan, and ultimately he and his party will bear the responsibility for its passage and implementation. At this time, I would like to remind President Trump that he said repeatedly in the campaign that he would expand treatment for Americans suffering from opioid addiction, but this mess of a replacement bill would rip treatment away from hundreds of thousands of Americans dealing with opioid addiction. President Trump said he would ensure Americans with preexisting conditions would continue to have access to coverage, but this bill makes that harder in several ways. President Trump, in his campaign, said:

> Everybody's got to be covered. . . . I am going to take care of everybody. I don't care if it's going to cost me votes or not. Everybody's going to be taken care of, much better than they're being taken care of now. . . . They can have their doctors. They can have their plans, they can have everything.

''They can have everything.''

Well, if you read the bill the way it reduces funding for Medicaid and replaces the Affordable Care Act subsidies with much smaller tax credits, there is just no way this bill meets the President's standard.

Was the Affordable Care Act perfect? No. It could use some improvements, but Democrats spent a long time thinking about it and crafting the policy to achieve two very real and specific goals, expand coverage, lower costs.

TrumpCare will do the very opposite. If it has any one coherent positive goal, it is to limit the tax burdens on the very wealthy, and in the process it will badly hurt millions of Americans and throw our healthcare system back into chaos.

If the final product out of the House looks anything like this draft, the Senate should consider it a moral duty to reject it.

I yield the floor.

DISAPPROVING A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.J. Res. 44, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

> A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 44) disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to Bureau of Land Management regulations that establish the procedures used to prepare, revise, or amend land use plans pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be 8 hours of debate equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am pleased the Senate is at the point we are this morning. Last night, we agreed to proceed to consideration of H.J. Res. 44, which will overturn the Bureau of Land Management's Planning 2.0 Rule. The House has considered this already. They passed this resolution on a strong bipartisan basis. It was a 48-vote margin. They did this just before the February recess, and so it is now in front of the Senate.

As the sponsor of the Senate version, I have come to the floor now to explain to colleagues why this BLM Planning 2.0 Rule is such a bad rule and to urge its nullification.

There are probably a lot of folks that are asking the question: BLM Planning 2.0, what is it? It is not just folks that are listening, it is colleagues here. What exactly is Planning 2.0 and what exactly does Planning 2.0 do? A lot of people are saying: I never heard of this one. Where did it come from? Based on that, I think a lot of context is in order as we begin this debate.

The Bureau of Land Management is a Federal agency that manages 245 million acres of land in 12 Western States, along with 700 million acres of Federal and non-Federal subsurface estate.

Congress has directed the BLM to manage those lands according to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. That is too long to say. So we just refer to it as FLPMA. It serves as the agency's organic act. It mandates a multiple-use mission for BLM lands. I think it is important to always remember that. BLM is required to manage under the concept of multiple use. It lays out a planning process for its mission. It establishes a special status relationship between the Federal Government and the States and the local governments that are affected by the agency's resource management plans.

I think it is important, as we are focusing on the BLM right now, that we remember that BLM lands are not national parks or wildlife refuges. They are not wild and scenic rivers or wilderness. BLM lands are working lands. They are valuable—not because they might contain a Mount Denali, like up north, or the Grand Canyon—but rather because these lands contain energy and minerals and they can be used. Again, this is the multiple-use concept. They can be used for grazing. They can be used for recreation and many other purposes.

They are valuable in this way and as such are a leading source of good jobs for families and communities all across the West. BLM's management of western lands has never been without controversy. That is part of the reason that the last administration decided to overhaul the regulations that guide the planning process. The stated goals from the administration were to create a better process that would increase transparency, increase public involvement, and reduce the amount of time it takes to develop a resource management plan.

So those clearly all sound like good ideas, good goals. Unfortunately, the reason we are here today seeking to overturn this planning 2.0 rule is that

the BLM absolutely failed to achieve any of those three goals. Instead of greater transparency, BLM delivered a new process that ensures less transparency. Instead of expanding public participation, Western States are looking at fewer and weaker opportunities to influence the management of local lands.

Planning 2.0 also turns the relationship between federal, state, and the local governments on its head. It just really turns it upside down. What actually happens then is that it has effectively subverted FLPMA, shattering the special status arrangement that the West is supposed to have under the Federal law.

As a Senator for the State of Alaska when this rule came out, I looked critically at it and I have problems with many aspects of the rule. I know I am joined by nearly all of my western colleagues and many who are not from the West but who have taken the time to understand how our land management laws are supposed to work and who have looked critically at this rule.

The more my staff and I have unpacked the Planning 2.0 Rule, the less we like it and the greater is our conviction that this rule should be overturned through the Congressional Review Act. That is why we are here. I could go on for quite some time, but for purposes of this statement, I will list this morning my four main criticisms, all of which compound each other and show why this rule must be repealed.

First of all, Planning 2.0 seeks to transition to a landscape-level approach for land management planning. It is not a bad concept on its own, really. I don't have any problem with BLM determining, for instance, where our solar resources are located, but to make that a defining measure and to make that a defining feature of a resource management plan is a bad idea.

It all but assures that new and revised plans will not have the level of detail or specificity that is needed to properly manage our local resources. It allows for planning areas to cross State lines without regard to the competing priorities of neighboring Governors. It does not ensure that existing State and local plans will be consistent. It is very obvious that BLM will deploy it as a mechanism to reduce or perhaps to eliminate many reasonable uses of Federal land that provide jobs and support communities all across the West.

The second criticism I have is that Planning 2.0 allows BLM officials to remove the decisionmaking authority from our field offices and our State directors, and it tends to centralize that power at BLM headquarters. So for those of us in the West, we are looking at a situation where effectively the management decisions of our land are being taken from those who are on the ground, people who really understand the conditions and are those who are most impacted by it. It shifts it back East to be decided by those who don't have that same local understanding, who might not really have any understanding as to the areas and why this is so important.

So centralizing power at BLM headquarters, in my view, is never the right direction. I am not suggesting that this is going to happen every time with every decision. However it could happen at any time, whenever a future administration decides that a decision needs to be made at the headquarters level rather than locally. So now, at a moment's notice—perhaps without even any notice at all—decisionmaking authority can be taken away from a Western State with expertise and effectively siloed here in Washington, DC. That is not the direction to be taken.

The third area of concern I have is that Planning 2.0 reduces the ability of western stakeholders to provide input into the land management process, as well as their stature within it. So, again, it compounds the fact that you are shifting decisionmaking authority back here to the East. By further limiting stakeholders' input, that is very problematic.

Now, the agency has talked a good game about public participation. But if you read the rule, what it effectively does is just kind of front-load public input while cutting later opportunities for feedback. If left in place, Planning 2.0 would ensure BLM would be able to maximize its decisionmaking power while at the same time effectively sidelining input from Western States.

We previously were in a situation where western stakeholders had a seat on the stage before this rule, but under it they are really demoted. They are effectively demoted to a middle row in the mezzanine as part of a bigger crowd, but with no special status. I think it is important to keep that in context.

The fourth area of concern is that BLM 2.0 weakens and eliminates the requirements in FLPMA that require BLM to coordinate planning and resource uses with our States and local governments. Under this rule, BLM shifts the burden for making sure that resource management plans are consistent with State and local governments plans away from itself and onto the States and onto the local governments. That is not right.

The agency is also limiting the opportunities that those government have to identify and remedy deficiencies within and across plans wherever they may be found.

So here are a couple of examples this morning for the Senate, just to illustrate why so many of us are concerned about this and are opposed to Planning 2.0. You have to ask yourself: Is it fair and is it really what Congress intended, for a western stakeholder to have the same voice and influence over the management of their local lands as any other member of the general public from anywhere else, with no connection, no relationship to these areas?

To be more specific, should a small placer miner in Chicken, Alaska, or a cattle grazer in Nevada be relegated to the same status as a lawyer in, say, Vermont who has never visited either Chicken, Alaska, or rural Nevada? My answer to this is pretty easy. It is a simple no. But that is what awaits us under Planning 2.0.

So here is a real world example of what Planning 2.0 will mean on the ground. Last year, the BLM finalized a resource management plan for 6.5 million acres of eastern Interior Alaska. Much of that plan was developed in accordance with the principles of Planning 2.0. So what does it actually look like for us up there in Alaska, in the eastern Interior area?

The plan closes nearly three-quarters of the 40-mile district, where the only economic activity, really, is placer mining—small placer mining. They closed it to mineral entry. More than 1 million acres are withdrawn into what they call ''areas of critical environmental concern''. This is a land management tool that BLM has used more and more in recent years to sidestep Congress's sole authority to designate Federal wilderness.

So the agency sought public comment, but it was limited public comment. Then it effectively ignored the comments that it did receive. Ultimately, very few Alaskans were able to participate in the development of the plan, and even fewer Alaskans are happy with the final outcome of the plan. As we expected and as we feared, the Planning 2.0 process was used to shut down a reasonable use of Federal land that the last administration just did not like. This was done even though it enjoys overwhelming support among local residents who really depend on it for their livelihood.

The Planning 2.0 process was also used to close off Federal lands to the public in violation of the ''no more'' clauses within ANILCA, or the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, even though there was no imminent threat or reason to do so. So, as colleagues are considering how they will cast their vote on this resolution of disapproval, I am sure, again, that many had not really focused on this Planning 2.0 before. Most of them would never be able to find Chicken, Alaska, on a map, and they are thinking: This is not going to impact me. I am not from the West.

But for those of us in the West, if you live in one of the 12 Western States that have BLM land, believe me, you are impacted. I would suggest that what we are seeing, starting in Alaska, is something that simply won't stay up there. If this rule is allowed to remain in place, you will see that move through all of our Western States.

BLM maintains and periodically revises dozens of resource management plans in its 12 Western states. So if Planning 2.0 stays on the books, I think what it will do is it will harm our Nation's energy producers. I think it will harm our mineral developers. I think it will harm those who rely on

Federal lands for grazing. It will most certainly cost us jobs. It will cost us economic opportunity, and it will hurt the communities and the people of our Western States.

I would ask that you don't just take my word for this. Six counties from six different States have challenged this rule as impairing the informational and coordination rights of local governments. They believe that it violates FLPMA and that BLM has failed to properly evaluate the impact that it will have. I think they have a very strong case. This is a fatally flawed rule. Our best option is to overturn it while we have the ability to do so under the Congressional Review Act and to hold BLM accountable to the underlying statute and its multiple-use mission. If we can agree to do that today, we can then work with our new Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke, to make genuine improvements to the BLM land management planning process. I know that Secretary Zinke cares about our public lands. He understands these issues, and I think he is dedicated to ensuring that we get this right.

I would like to close by thanking the roughly 80 stakeholder groups that are supporting our disapproval resolution. I also thank the 17 Senators who are cosponsoring the Senate version of it. I thank the new administration, which has released a statement of policy in support of it. I also acknowledge and thank Representative CHENEY and Chairman BISHOP in the House, who led the resolution through the House with good bipartisan support a couple of weeks back.

It is now the Senate's turn to act on this. It is our turn to recognize why this rule deserves to be overturned. For the good of our Western States, let's send this disapproval resolution to the President's desk.

With that, I again urge the Senate to support House Joint Resolution 44.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I come to the floor to speak in opposition to this resolution. Many of my colleagues know that we have had discussions in the Senate on several Congressional Review Act resolutions. In principle, Congressional Review Act resolutions—besides repealing these existing Executive regulations—also have the unfortunate aspect to them that they negate an agency's ability to make new rules anytime soon in the same area. For example, if you like some of this rule but not all of it, by using the CRA, you are literally preventing the agency from moving forward on any improvements to the rule.

I always believe in the legislative process. Working with my colleague from Alaska or working with my colleagues from other areas, I think we have proved that we can resolve key issues. But passing this Congressional Review Act resolution on an issue so important as our public lands and negating the hard work that the executive branch did over a long period of time is something that my colleagues and I just have to say no to.

When it comes to public lands, we want transparency; we want sunshine. We want a bottom-up approach when it comes to land management, and we certainly want collaboration.

As was said earlier, the Bureau of Land Management manages about 245 million acres of public land. That is about 10 percent of the Nation and 30 percent of our Nation's minerals. So when it comes to this management, it is very important that they continue to follow a very good bottom-up process for land management.

I will read now from the actual requirements from the law that oversees them, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. They have to use and observe the principles of multiple use and sustained yield; consider present and potential uses of the public lands; weigh long-term benefits to the public against short-term benefits; consider the relative scarcity of the values; give priority to areas of critical environmental concern; provide for compliance with applicable pollution control laws, including State and Federal air, water, noise, or other pollution standards or implementation plans; and coordinate with Federal Departments and Agencies, State and local governments, and Indian Tribes.

So all of these things are part of what is already in existing law. The concept here is to make sure that we continue to have a transparent and open process that is bottom-up. And I certainly believe in a bottom-up process because our public lands must not be territories owned and operated, for example, for the sole benefit of the oil, gas, and mining industries, and we can't have polluters polluting in these areas and not have input from the various communities about their concerns on those issues.

For example, in 2001, the Bush administration proposed revisions to six land use plans in eastern Utah, and these plans were finalized in 2008 at the end of the Bush administration, with only limited opportunity for public involvement. All six plans were challenged in Federal court by several motorized recreation and conservation organizations.

It is now 2017, and these plans still remain tied up in litigation. That is why those in the off-road vehicle industry did not feel as though they had input at the very beginning stages of the process. In January the Obama administration negotiated a settlement, which is still pending in court, but this shows how, if there isn't meaningful public involvement, we are just going to hit a logjam. This is why I think it is so important for us to update this rule.

It has been a long time since the agency updated this rule; I think since 1983. That was the last time—over 30 years ago. I guarantee you, in those 30 years, we can come up with a better process for input from our constituents on important land use issues.

I know the new Interior Secretary likes to talk about Teddy Roosevelt, who once said: ''The Nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.''

Ensuring we are preserving and increasing the value of our public lands is exactly what is meant by this planning rule that the Bureau of Land Management put out. This rule wants to make sure that we have input from the local community.

I think it is important to note that this is not a rule that regulates any specific use on public lands. It does not restrict any particular activity. It simply updates the current law in saying that it is better to have input from local officials and to use that input from local officials to update the process in an earlier way.

I said to my staff: It is like us huddling and saying that we should write legislation and then me not coming back for 7 years and then letting them know I am on my way to the Senate floor to drop a bill. We would never do that, and the land plans in these communities shouldn't be done that way either.

Once a local Bureau of Land Management official starts to discuss a plan, there should be transparency. The local community should know exactly what that plan looks like before it is going to be finalized. It needs to encourage collaboration of the stakeholders or else—as the example I just gave in Utah—you are going to end up in litigation or an elongated process before such management plans can take place.

It seems to me that these are pretty reasonable goals: Have a bottom-up process that encourages discussion throughout the plan so that local communities are not caught off guard, and continue to emphasize the roles of State, local, and Tribal governments and cooperating agencies so that they can have input in the process as well.

Finally, I know that there are some who would like to claim that the BLM State director oversees the planning process in their specific State and that somehow that might change, but that is not the case.

Many organizations understand that there will continue to be a bottom-up process under the new rule. That is why so many sportsmen and outdoors groups—like the Outdoor Industry Association, the National Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, the Nature Conservancy, the Wilderness Society, and the National Parks Conservation Association—all say: Do not overturn the rule that was implemented. These groups know that 30 years is too long of a period of time to have to wait to encourage public involvement and collaboration, that

these issues are too important to try to turn back the clock and to try to exclude sportsmen and various interests of public access from the planning and use of our public lands.

I hope my colleagues will turn down this override of a very important project that has guaranteed public access, transparency, and sunshine in planning for our public lands.

MEDICAID

Madam President, I would like to come to the floor to discuss the proposed Medicaid changes that are part of what the House is proposing to the Affordable Care Act. This is so important because, as many people know, Medicaid has been a bedrock of how individuals get access to healthcare in our country. And in many parts of our States—at least the State of Washington—Medicaid has been a lifeline in both rural communities and in urban areas and we have heard much from various people that it is actually helping to stabilize healthcare costs, so costs are not rising as fast and giving people access to care in the most serious situations where we are trying to fight opioids or are trying to find more efficiency in our healthcare system.

First of all, I think the House bill is literally a war on Medicaid. I say that because it is a capitation of healthcare costs.

The federal government, according to one budget analyst at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, would shift the cost to the States by more than $500 billion over the next 10 years. That would mean that millions of people would lose coverage and be affected by this kind of repeal.

Now, many people have talked about how they might block-grant Medicaid. I also thought that was a horrible idea because, really, it just becomes nothing but a budget mechanism to reduce the Federal partnership that exists between the Federal Government and the States on Medicaid. But the House chose not to do exactly block-granting. They said, instead, that we are just going to have a budget cap at the Federal level on how much money they are going to spend on Medicaid and then work toward the repeal of Medicaid expansion. This is a very bad idea.

The actual per capita cut—I know my colleagues like to come out here and talk about a patient-centered relationship, which is exactly what getting off fee-for-service and going to managed care does. But a per capita cost is nothing but a budget mechanism to cap the Federal responsibility to Medicaid and cut costs and basically shift the pain onto the States.

I have been on various meeting tours in the State of Washington, talking to my constituents about this. In Seattle, Spokane, and Olympia. I met with hospitals, community clinics, women's health groups, local and State government officials, civic leaders, civil rights organizations, and I heard many things.

I basically heard hospitals say there is evidence that Medicaid is actually lowering the commercial insurance premiums because of less uncompensated care. And I heard a safety net hospital in Spokane tell me that the population is already 70 percent Medicaid and Medicare and that there is no way they can absorb this kind of a cut to the Medicaid program and it would just mean healthcare costs would rise in the future. I heard a hospital in Seattle tell me that this kind of attempt is nothing but a budget trigger. It is not a reform of the system. It is simply a way to cut the budget.

What we believe is that Medicaid is a key part of our healthcare delivery system. The expansion has worked well and we should continue to move to ways to innovate Medicaid as a way to save costs.

Unfortunately, right now, many people misunderstand how important Medicaid is in the mental health and addiction area. Basically, when you take what we have tried to do to address the opioid epidemic, those individuals who are working through the bills that we just recently passed to try to help patients in the emergency room or who are in psychiatric care or who are trying to deal with this grave problem we have in the United States, getting rid of Medicaid for those individuals, you might as well roll back all the assistance we just provided as part of the CURES and other legislation. Why? Because these individuals will not be able to access the type of care they need without the support.

I do believe that what we need to do is innovate instead. There are many examples of innovation in our healthcare delivery system. One example, as I have mentioned on the floor several times, is going from nursing home care to community-based care.

Medicaid is going to equal long-term care. So many Americans are not going to be ready to deal with their long-term healthcare issues, and when they are not, they are going to use Medicaid for their long-term care.

We showed in the State of Washington over more than a decade's period of time that we could save $2.7 billion by shifting our Medicaid population to community-based care instead of nursing home care. If we would do that same kind of innovation at the Federal level, we could achieve substantial savings instead of saving money by cutting.

The issue here is that innovation in our delivery system—innovation, not a budget cap—is what is going to help us with our healthcare needs for the future when it comes to the Medicaid population.

So I urge my colleagues to speak loudly against this proposal to try to cap Medicaid, to try to shift the burden to States and local providers, to county governments, to jails, to all of those individuals who are going to see that population when and if they don't have Medicaid coverage and instead work together on expanding the innovation in Medicaid and coming up with savings we need to take care of and to provide health insurance coverage to so many Americans.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NUCLEAR ENERGY INNOVATION AND MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about bipartisan legislation designed to strengthen our Nation's nuclear energy capacity. It is called the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act. I am a strong supporter of American nuclear energy. It is a vital component of our ''all of the above'' American energy plan. My home State of Wyoming plays a key role in American nuclear energy supply. In Wyoming, we produce more uranium than any other State.

Nuclear energy is clean, safe, reliable, and affordable. It also provides a major boost to the economy. American nuclear plants provide thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in benefits to local communities. U.S. nuclear powerplants have run safely for decades, and many of them will serve our country for years and decades to come. But after decades of reliable power from our traditional nuclear powerplants, these nuclear powerplants are experiencing innovation with opportunities that are now taking shape in the nuclear industry. Increased private investment is occurring in nuclear energy, and it has led to improvements in safety, security, and in cost.

This is no longer a traditional nuclear industry. There are nuclear startups which are being backed by American entrepreneurs. Research and work are being done by Bill Gates, of all people. These folks envision fundamentally transforming nuclear energy technology. I believe the advances are exciting. The biggest challenges these innovators face, however, are the costs and delays from regulatory red-tape. Many of these delays come from trying to navigate a regulatory system that was developed around one specific technology, which is water-cooled reactors. The traditional water-cooled reactors have powered our Navy and our electricity grid and have done it successfully for decades, but today's entrepreneurs are pursuing very different designs. They are using high-temperature gases, molten salts, and other high-tech materials to advance the safety, efficiency, and reliability of nuclear energy.

The nuclear regulatory system needs to be updated to enable this innovation. That is why I join with my colleagues in introducing the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization

Act. Cosponsors include Senators WHITEHOUSE, INHOFE, BOOKER, FISCHER, CAPITO, and MANCHIN. We come together having introduced S. 512. Our bipartisan bill seeks to modernize the Nuclear Regulatory Commission by providing a flexible regulatory framework for licensing advanced nuclear reactors. The NRC needs a modern regulatory framework that is predictable and efficient. Reactor operators for both traditional and advanced reactors need timely decisionmaking from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. At the same time, the Commission needs to maintain its ability to assess a variety of technologies and meet its mission of administering safety and security to the American people. Additionally, our legislation will update the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's fee recovery rules.

This measure is going to bring increased transparency and accountability to the NRC, while also improving the Commission's efficiency and timeliness.

This bill will also help to preserve the uranium producers who are essential to powering the technology. The Energy Information Administration reports that uranium production in 2016 was at its lowest level since way back in 2005. It is crucial that we restore our American uranium sector and preserve these important jobs.

Our bipartisan legislation is going to enable the development of innovative reactors with bold, new technologies. As a nation, we can either lead this technology revolution or we can defer to our competitors. China and Russia are already developing advanced technologies regardless of what we do here in the United States. America needs to be a leader of nuclear development. We need to create an environment where entrepreneurs can flourish. This is the way to create jobs here at home and revitalize our nuclear energy sector at the same time.

One way to enable innovation for advanced reactors is to provide a regulatory framework that is predictable and cost-effective and that maintains the NRC's safety and security mission. The bill we haved introduced, the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act, does all of this.

This broadly bipartisan bill will strengthen American energy independence and foster innovation and job creation. I thank Senators WHITEHOUSE, INHOFE, BOOKER, CRAPO, FISCHER, CAPITO, and MANCHIN for cosponsoring this legislation, and I urge its support.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I know the Presiding Officer is a fellow westerner, from a State that is impacted by decisions made by our public lands management agencies, whether that is the Bureau of Land Management or the Forest Service. Both Colorado and Arizona, as well as Wyoming and Utah—all of our Western States—are greatly affected by decisions that are made in Washington, DC. In a conversation I had with the Presiding Officer from Arizona, we discussed the fact that 85 percent of the State of Arizona is managed by the Federal Government. Whether it is the State or a Tribal entity or the Federal Government, about 47 percent is being federally managed. In the State of Colorado, about half of our State is managed by a public entity. Whether that is the State or a Tribal entity or the Forest Service, BLM land, the Department of the Interior, roughly half of the State is managed by the Federal Government, the State government or others. In other words, it is not in private landownership. So that means that the decisions made by these public land management agencies have a significantly outsized impact on our States than it does on States say east of the Mississippi.

So today I come to the floor to talk about one of those decisions made by the Bureau of Land Management's planning 2.0 rule. The discussion we are having today is about whether we should approve a resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act to stop the BLM 2.0 rule from going forward.

The Bureau of Land Management has over 245 million acres of public land. Almost all of those acres are west of the Mississippi River, predominantly in 12 States. The final BLM 2.0 rule is an example of how little Washington bureaucrats understand about the West and how little they understand about how the Federal Government and how Federal policymaking doesn't work when you try to take something they think of in Washington and put it on the people of the West.

It is the promulgation of this rule that actually led to my call for relocating the headquarters of the Bureau of Land Management out of Washington, DC, and to put it in a place like Grand Junction, CO, because I believe it is important that we have public land managers and decisions about our public lands being made by those who are directly affected by that public land being in their backyard. If you live in the State of Colorado or if you are a county commissioner on the Western Slope, some of those counties have over 90 percent of their county managed by the Federal Government. A decision made by that public land agency directly impacts them, not in a couple of weeks or months or next year but that very same day. To have somebody from Washington, DC, deciding a one-size-fits-all approach that is going to apply to a Western Slope county commissioner is just absurd. So moving the BLM headquarters to a place like Colorado or Arizona would absolutely result in better policies that work on the ground for our Governors, landowners, county commissioners, farmers, ranchers, cattlemen, energy producers, sportsmen, and recreationalists because they would be nearest to the lands that the decisions being made are affecting.

I hope we can move this country away from this ''Washington knows best'' mentality. That is why this resolution of disapproval is so important, because that is exactly what it would do, which is to remove ''Washington knows best'' by stopping the BLM planning 2.0 rule.

As it stands, I don't believe this rule should move forward. I have committed to Coloradans, to county commissioners, and to the people of my State that I will always have the goal to put more Colorado in Washington and less Washington in Colorado. A county commissioner in western Colorado, from Dolores, Garfield, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Jackson, Mesa, Moffat, Montezuma, Montrose, or Rio Blanco County should have more say in decisions that are impacting their backyard on BLM lands than someone sitting behind a desk in New York City. They tell me that their ability to have an impact on their backyard lessens as a result of the BLM planning 2.0 rule. They believe they actually have less say under the new rule than somebody who doesn't live anywhere near their land or their State or their county or those BLM lands.

I believe that Colorado State and local leaders and local users should have a strong voice on local land management decisions. It is their backyard. Yes, it is public land, but the fact is they are the ones trying to make a living, trying to govern, trying to make decisions that are best for their constituents, and they should have a voice in those decisions.

I also firmly believe in managing our public lands under the multiple-use philosophy, which promotes recreation, grazing, and energy development with a balanced approach.

If the Congressional Review Act's resolution of disapproval on the BLM planning 2.0 rule is approved and signed into law, there will still be an opportunity to improve management and update policies at the Bureau of Land Management.

I think that is one of the areas of misinformation that we see about resolutions of disapproval. There are some who support the BLM planning 2.0 rule, and there are some who have supported other rules that this Chamber has voted to disapprove through the Congressional Review Act. Those people who support it sometimes get their facts wrong when they say things like: Well, if you repeal this rule, if you approve the resolution of disapproval, then there is no way that you can actually rule in this area again or make a

regulation that impacts this area of law again. That is simply not true. The truth is, when you use a resolution of disapproval, it simply says that we think this is the wrong rule that went forward through the executive branch agencies and we ought to use Congress—those people who understand the needs of their States better than a rulemaker in Washington, DC—to go forward with a new piece of legislation, a new authorization for a different rule. If we do that, then, we are going to have better policies because we have been able to account for every voice in the process, instead of leaving voices like those county commissioners, whom I talked about, out to dry.

I have told many recreationalists and sportsmen in Colorado that I am working with our Democratic colleagues and Secretary Zinke at the Department of the Interior on how we can move forward with the land management decisions and land use plans that take into account some of their concerns with this resolution of disapproval. There are updates and modifications that can be achieved, but they should all have stakeholder input. I don't believe that this planning rule 2.0 actually took into account all of the different stakeholders' views.

Working with some landowners cannot be at the expense of others. Right now, our cattlemen, farmers, ranchers, and county commissioners have severe concerns with BLM planning 2.0, and they feel as though they did not have a voice in the development of this rule.

I believe we can do better as elected officials and that we can give these local users' and landowners' interests a stronger voice in moving forward and that we can move forward together. So let's approve this resolution of disapproval that would claw back the BLM 2.0 rule. Let's make sure that local voices are given a place at the table. Let's make sure that county commissioners have influence over their area that is greater than somebody in New York City who doesn't live there. Let's make sure that we can protect the multiple-use philosophy of our public lands. Whether it is energy, recreation, or renewable energy, we have incredible opportunities on our public lands. But we can do better by working with Congress and taking into account every voice and making sure that we have a rule that is broadly supported instead of narrowly supported.

That is why I intend to support the Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval today, and I hope that my colleagues will do the same, as we truly find a bipartisan solution to give the people of our States a greater say over policies that affect their own backyard.

Mr. President, thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Washington.

TRUMPCARE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to take a few minutes to address the deeply harmful bill House Republicans announced yesterday to be put in place, TrumpCare. Since the election, I have had constituent after constituent come up to me with tears in their eyes wondering what the future holds for their healthcare. They are worried about losing coverage, wondering how they are going to make ends meet if their premiums spike, and they are worried that without protections laid out in the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies will once again have more power to decide what kinds of care are and are not covered.

My constituents and people across the country were listening when President Trump said he would provide ''insurance for everybody'' that would be higher quality and lower cost. They heard Senate Republicans say it is important any new healthcare plan ''do no harm.'' They even saw House Republicans reassure them that they wouldn't ''pull the rug out'' from under anyone on ObamaCare.

This legislation that has now been rolled out represents a broken promise to patients and families. It will leave them sicker, more vulnerable to the chaos Republicans are creating within our healthcare system, and less financially secure. Millions of people who only just gained Medicaid coverage will lose it. Premiums could increase as much as 30 percent for people who lose coverage because they are too sick to work or become unemployed. People struggling with mental illness and substance abuse disorders, including opioid addiction, which is ravaging States nationwide, may find their insurance no longer has to cover the treatment they need. Key public health programs that families across the country rely on would be slashed.

TrumpCare would be a disaster for our workers and our families, but let's be clear about whom it does work for: those at the top. TrumpCare not only harms the same workers and families Republicans promised to help, it does so in order to reduce the tax burden for the wealthiest and for the insurance companies. In fact, this bill even includes a payout for insurance company executives. This is the definition of taking our healthcare system backward.

I also want to make it clear what TrumpCare will mean specifically for women. As someone who has fought time after time to protect women's ability to make their own healthcare decisions, I can tell you, this bill is a wish list by and for the extreme politicians who insist on telling women what to do with their own bodies. It will defund Planned Parenthood. It will undermine key protections for women's healthcare that were included in the Affordable Care Act. By slashing Medicaid, this bill will take coverage away from low-income women and women of color who disproportionately rely on Medicaid to get the care they need.

I cannot oppose this bill more strongly, and I am going to be doing everything I can to fight back against it. I know Senate Democrats are ready to do so as well, and I urge any Republican who is truly concerned about their constituent's health, their well-being, and their financial security, rather than just partisan politics, to do the right thing and join us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

REPEALING AND REPLACING OBAMACARE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday the House of Representatives released a way forward to dismantle and replace ObamaCare, which will be to deliver on one of our biggest campaign promises made to the American people, not just in 2016 but in essentially every election since 2010.

We know ObamaCare has been an unmitigated disaster. Premiums on the ObamaCare exchanges are up by 25 percent. Millions of Americans have been kicked off their healthcare plans, and the economy has been saddled with billions of dollars in new regulations.

The fact is, ObamaCare has been one broken promise after another. President Obama and advocates of this law said if you wanted to keep your plan, you could keep it, but that didn't pan out. They said if you liked your doctor, you didn't have to find another one. That didn't turn out to be true either. They promised people across the country would have more coverage, more options, and better healthcare, all at a more affordable price. Well, that ended up not being true either.

The truth is, ObamaCare hasn't made healthcare more affordable for a lot of Americans. In fact, in Texas, if you have a gross income of $24,000, you can end up spending up to 30 percent of your gross income just on healthcare costs. That is not affordable healthcare. That is unaffordable healthcare.

Clearly, ObamaCare is no gold standard. It is a failed piece of legislation, one that is full of empty promises and one we have to scrap and start over again. Now we have an opportunity to do better for the people we represent, who are counting on us to deliver, to repeal ObamaCare and replace it with options that work.

I believe the plan released last night is a major step in the right direction. Patients need better tools like health savings accounts. That way they have more control over their healthcare decisions, and we can keep the bureaucracy out of it. We need to break down the barriers that restrict choice and keep Americans choosing an insurance plan that works for them and their families, and we need to empower employers, particularly small business owners, to provide their employees with the kind of affordable coverage that meets their needs.

To sum it up, we need to move healthcare decisions out of Washington and send them back to the States and back to patients and families and their doctors. That will only happen once we

repeal ObamaCare and replace it with options that work for more affordable healthcare coverage that patients choose, not that the government mandates and punishes you if you don't buy it but freedom of choice at a better cost and meeting the needs of individual patients.

I am glad our colleagues in the House and our friends in the White House fully understand why this is such a priority and why we need to keep the promise we made. As soon as we can do that and deliver on that major promise to the American people—the sooner we do that, a whole lot of American families across the country will feel relief.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, this morning, the Senate Judiciary Committee considered the nominations of Rod Rosenstein and Rachel Brand as Deputy Attorney General and Associate Attorney General, respectively. Both of them are longtime, well-respected public servants. Mr. Rosenstein has spent his career serving the Justice Department and Presidents of both political parties. In fact, Mr. Rosenstein started in the George H.W. Bush Justice Department back in 1990, and he served every President since that time. He is a career public servant who has served in a bipartisan manner and has also been confirmed by the Senate. President Bush appointed him to be U.S. attorney and so did President Obama.

When the Obama administration needed a prosecutor of the utmost integrity to investigate national security leaks that looked highly political, they turned—you guessed it—to Rod Rosenstein. Put another way, if Rod Rosenstein is not an acceptable nominee, who is?

This morning in the Senate Judiciary Committee, I heard some of our colleagues suggest that Mr. Rosenstein needed to make a pledge to appoint a special counsel if he was confirmed as Deputy Attorney General. We had two of our Maryland colleagues extoll his credentials, and rightly so, and call him a person of the utmost integrity and professionalism. Yet they, in essence, wanted him to fire himself once he became Deputy Attorney General and appoint a special counsel to do the job he would be confirmed and nominated to do. He wisely declined to make that judgment, certainly before he has had access to the facts and the information needed.

I believe he will make a formidable Deputy Attorney General, but instead of actually vetting the candidates on the merits of their impressive backgrounds and strong credentials, some used the hearing as an opportunity to air their various grievances on the current Attorney General, our former colleague Jeff Sessions. Over the weekend, some went so far as to threaten to block Mr. Rosenstein's nomination if he wouldn't agree to appoint a special counsel.

I hope my colleagues in this Chamber don't stonewall his nomination or use it as a platform to disparage Attorney General Sessions. The Attorney General made a decision to recuse himself from a further official role in looking into the allegations of Russian involvement in our election in 2016. I respect his decision. The fact is, we don't need another commission to study Russian involvement in the last election because we have a bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee, chaired by Senator RICHARD BURR and the Vice Chair is MARK WARNER—a bipartisan Senate Select Committee that is doing a deep dive into the allegations, including gaining access to classified information which would be important to consider in reaching a conclusion.

Yesterday I was out at CIA Headquarters and saw four large binders' worth of classified material, which obviously I am not going to discuss, but it demonstrates that this investigation is already well underway. Members of the committee and our staff are already working with the intelligence community to get the information we need in order to reach an impartial and bipartisan conclusion.

The fact is, our Democratic friends have a short memory when it comes to the Obama Justice Department, one of the most politicalized Justice Departments in American history. Loretta Lynch, who privately met with President Bill Clinton while her Department was investigating his wife's email scandal, never recused herself from the matter.

Then there was Attorney General Holder. To my knowledge, he was the first Attorney General ever held in contempt of Congress because he refused to cooperate with our legitimate oversight responsibilities when it came to Operation Fast and Furious. Well, he never recused himself and never appointed a special counsel, even though I believe he should have. Compare Attorney General Sessions, who did what he believed was the right thing to do. He recused himself when there was even a suggestion he might not be able to be impartial. He made that commitment from the beginning, well before he was confirmed. He stood by that promise last week. Attorney General Sessions' integrity is intact, and he did the right thing, but Loretta Lynch didn't. Eric Holder didn't.

For our colleagues now to suggest that Attorney General Sessions not only should recuse himself but he should resign is beyond outrageous. To suggest that the incoming Deputy Attorney General, Rod Rosenstein, should somehow abdicate the role he has been nominated for, and to which he will be confirmed, is to ask him to prejudge the case before he has even had a chance to look at the evidence.

All I am asking for is our colleagues to have a little perspective. These nominees are the right caliber of people with the exact expertise we need to make sure our Justice Department runs effectively and impartially follows the law of the land. These are the types of leaders you want to handle the big issues facing the Department of Justice.

I hope soon our colleagues on the other side of the aisle will turn their attention to doing what the American people sent them to do; that is, to consider legislation rather than dragging their feet and blocking the Trump administration from getting the team he has chosen to work with in various Cabinet positions and sub-Cabinet positions.

Hopefully, soon they will decide not to obstruct progress and grind this Chamber's business to a halt but rather will be partners with us, working together to try to build consensus where we can and move the country forward.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill 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.

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, the Bureau of Land Management has a mission set by Congress; that is, to manage the Nation's public lands under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, which means that public land should be open to everything, from hunting and grazing to energy development and other reasonable uses.

The BLM currently manages more than 246 million acres of land and 700 million acres of Federal and non-Federal subsurface estate. Much of these lands are in the West, where Federal acres coexist with private and State-owned land. In order to manage its resources effectively, BLM is required to provide resource management plans. This planning has typically been led by BLM's field offices, in coordination with State, local, and Tribal governments that provide local input on how best to manage the land and its unique resources. However, in the final months of the last administration, the BLM sought to apply a top-down approach, essentially a one-size-fits-all, top-down approach to this resource management process. They termed it the planning 2.0 final rule.

The rule which was finalized in December changed how this planning is done and undermined the well-established process by limiting the ability of local input, public comment, and meaningful State consultation.

The final rule also pulled decision-making away from the regional BLM field offices and centralized it at BLM's headquarters in Washington, under the concept of ''landscape-level planning,'' which lets Washington define new

areas covering multiple States. The rule takes important decision-making away from local officials who know the land and understand the needs of their communities.

The BLM rule sought to ignore the multiple-use requirements established by Congress and diminishes the importance of energy development. The rule tilts the balance in favor of conservation and non-development and away from responsible energy development, as well as other uses, like grazing.

In a State like North Dakota, with a distinctive patchwork of underground Federal minerals and private or State surface ownership, this creates more uncertainty for energy producers and more difficulty for our ranchers. By repealing this rule, we are preserving our longstanding tradition of allowing multiple uses on Federal lands, while protecting the livelihoods of our ranchers, energy producers, and many others. That is why this resolution is supported by the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, along with the National Association of Counties, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, the Farm Bureau, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the Public Lands Council, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, just to name a few.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the CRA on the BLM planning 2.0 rule. I thank Chairman MURKOWSKI, the chairman of our Energy Committee, for her leadership on this important issue.

The House passed this CRA on February 7 in a bipartisan manner. I am hopeful the Senate will do so as well and send this bill to the President's desk this week.

Today's CRA ensures that State, local, and Tribal input and expertise should guide the management of our public lands. Let's stop the BLM's planning 2.0 rule and give the people who live and work in these communities a say on what happens in their hometowns. We can do that by voting for this CRA. I urge my colleagues to do so.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, the people spoke loudly last fall. For too long, the Obama administration ignored the common sense of those who managed the lands and our natural resources. Now is the time for that power to be put back into the hands of the folks who know it best; that is, the people of Montana, not Washington, DC. And the Bureau of Land Management's Planning 2.0 rule is no different.

The resolution we are debating today, H.J. Res. 44, would block the implementation of a rule that would fundamentally change the land planning process at the BLM. It would be for the worst.

During the Obama administration's final days in office, they put through many midnight rules costing a total of $157 billion, including this rule shift which was issued on December 12, 2016, which fundamentally changes the land planning process. The rule shifts the planning and decisionmaking away from those who know the land best, away from BLM regional field offices, and back to BLM Headquarters in Washington, DC. That is the exact opposite direction that land management should be going, and that is why this rule must go also.

This rule limits the voice of our local and State governments, and it strengthens the voice of folks who are living far away from the lands that are impacted.

Montana farmers, Montana ranchers, Montana miners, the Montana electric co-ops, Montana conservation districts, and Montana county commissioners have all expressed a concern for this rule and have urged congressional action. And there can't be a more commonsense list of Montanans than that list I just mentioned. In fact, even the western Governors are concerned. As recently as February 10, 2017, our own Governor of Montana, Steve Bullock, and Governor Daugaard from South Dakota urged Congress to direct BLM to reexamine the rule. ''Governors are concerned that BLM's emphasis on landscape-scale planning may lead to a resulting emphasis on national objectives over state and local objectives.'' ''Collectively, these changes severely limit the deference Governors were previously afforded with respect to RMP development.'' That is what our Governors are saying. I am quoting our Governors from the West.

There needs to be more balance in Federal land management. For the last 8 years, we have been out of balance. Oil and natural gas development on Federal lands dropped significantly under President Obama. In fact, for natural gas, we have seen an 18-percent decrease, while oil production on private and State lands doubled, versus the same on Federal land.

Montana has nearly 2 million acres of public land that are inaccessible to the public. Our farmers and ranchers in Montana need a more balanced partnership with the Federal land managers. They deserve more input in the development of land management policies, not less. By the way, our Federal forests in Montana are in dire need of more active management.

So where do we go next? There is no disagreement that revisions need to be made. Let's take this rule back to the drawing board and do it right. Let's work with our new Secretary of the Department of the Interior, RYAN ZINKE, a Montanan, and President Trump to restore more western commonsense to land management.

I urge my colleagues to support H.J. Res. 44.

RECESS

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. and that the time during the recess be charged equally to both sides on the joint resolution.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:35 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. FLAKE).

DISAPPROVING A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PORTMAN). The Senator from Utah, the President pro tempore.

COMMEMORATING RARE DISEASE DAY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage Senator KLOBUCHAR in a colloquy to commemorate Rare Disease Day in order to discuss issues facing patients and the families of those who have been diagnosed with these types of conditions.

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, as cochairs of the Rare Disease Caucus, Senator KLOBUCHAR and I have worked hard to bring more hope to patients and their families who are coping with rare diseases on a daily basis.

Today 1 in 20 individuals worldwide is living with one or more of the more than 7,000 rare diseases, 95 percent of which do not have an effective treatment. While the incentives provided by the Orphan Drug Act, first championed by me in 1983, has led to the approval of nearly 600 orphan drugs, much more needs to be done.

Many patients living with rare diseases rely on the FDA to evaluate and approve treatment options for their conditions. That is why it is so important for the FDA to use its authority to accelerate the evaluation and approval of drugs for treating rare diseases and for Congress to ensure that proper incentives exist for research to discover and make affordable treatments and cures available for this community.

To address this issue, Congress passed the FDA Safety and Innovation Act of 2012, which refined and strengthened the tools available to FDA to accelerate the evaluation and approval of new drugs targeting unmet medical needs for rare conditions. I have been paying close attention to how this new authority translates into advances for patients suffering from conditions such as Duchenne muscular dystrophy, atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome, Bertrand-N-glycanase deficiency, and other rare diseases.

In light of these changes over the past few years, I ask my friend from Minnesota whether the current approval process is achieving its goals of safety and efficacy without hampering the development of new therapies.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I thank Senator HATCH for beginning this colloquy. I am so proud to be a cochair of the Rare Disease Caucus with him, and I share my colleague's concerns. I think there must be improvements that are made. I

continue to be inspired by the families across my State, your State, and our country who work so hard to make it easier for kids to have access to drugs to treat their illnesses. Unfortunately, we haven't yet achieved all we can do for these families, and I have heard time and again about the emotional roller coaster that many of them have experienced when they interact with the Federal Government on new approaches for these rare disease conditions. Too often they are unaware when drugs are under review or confused about why experts or patients are not even consulted. The individuals suffering from these conditions and their families need greater clarity about the process for evaluating and approving these drugs, and they ought to be included and informed every step of the way.

It is critical that treatments that do exist for those with rare conditions be accessible and affordable. We must continue to protect the individuals from discrimination in insurance coverage and work to bring down costs. We have to ensure that incentives designed to spur the development and accessibility of treatments that the rare disease community desperately needs are not abused.

I ask Senator HATCH, as one with longstanding leadership on the bill that you passed that has helped so many people and saved lives, how can we focus on sharing this message with our colleagues and our constituents?

Mr. HATCH. I appreciate that question.

We must continue to urge the FDA to fully implement its relatively new authority. Every one of us in this body represents constituents who are battling rare diseases, and I urge the FDA to consider this flexibility as applied in reviewing all candidates' therapies.

I will continue to work closely with my Senate colleagues to ensure that the FDA uses the tools, authorities, and resources required to provide patients and physicians with new treatment options. I have also contacted the FDA frequently during the past year to encourage the agency to listen to the voices of patients during the agency's evaluation process.

When the Senate considers the nominee for FDA Commissioner, I will continue to stress the importance of incorporating a balanced and flexible approach when weighing risks, benefits, and outcomes, especially when dealing with small patient populations with such rapidly progressing prognoses.

Patients with limited or no treatment options are depending on FDA to utilize the flexibility outlined in FDASIA. This law, which provides full and fair review of new drug therapies in a timely manner, gives hope to patients suffering from life threatening diseases and, of course, their families as well.

I ask Senator KLOBUCHAR, how can we move forward into the next user fee agreement?

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Well, that is going to be very important and really an opportunity to make sure that this works for patients with rare diseases and their families. We know that affordability and accessibility remain paramount. We should also think about the burden that these conditions play and the critical role of the voice of the patient.

As you stated, Senator HATCH, more than 7,000 rare diseases exist, and the vast majority have no treatment. This is an extraordinary burden borne every day by Americans in every single State across the country. As we seek to continue making progress, including monitoring implementation of the advances in the bipartisan 21st Century Cures Act, we must ensure that rare disease treatments receive sufficient attention.

We also must encourage Federal agencies to better incorporate the patient's voice in their decisionmaking process. As I mentioned earlier, all too often as we rightly focus on evidence-based medicine, we can lose sight of the human experience of these and different therapies. What may seem simple in a lab may be overwhelming or difficult when applied to patients in real life situations—all the more so when children are involved. The FDA and all agencies should ensure that they have appropriate processes to seek and incorporate this vital input. The user fee agreement will be an opportunity for us to make this case.

I would like to thank Senator HATCH again for his time to discuss these issues that are very important to both of us. We look forward to engaging with our colleagues on these issues as we move forward to the implementation of the Cures Act, as well as the work on the Orphan Drugs Act, and as well as the user fee agreement.

Mr. HATCH. I thank my dear friend, the senior Senator from Minnesota, for her time with me today. It is very meaningful to me and, I think, to everybody who is concerned about this rare disease situation in our country.

This is just the start of our conversation for this Congress. There is so much left for us to do, and I am certain we will succeed as long as we stay together and work in a bipartisan way. So I thank my dear colleague for her words and support and the good leadership she provides in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I want to speak about the healthcare bill that has been laid out in the House now—introduced in the House of Representatives. I have great concern about the proposal as it relates to the people of Michigan, whom I represent, as well as to the people across the country. This proposal—or whatever passes—will be judged based on whether or not people pay more for their coverage, if they can find it, and whether they are going to be able to get the healthcare they need.

Healthcare is very personal. Despite the politics here in Congress and in the White House, healthcare is not political; it is very personal. Can you go to a doctor? Can you take your child to a doctor? Can your parents or grandparents get the nursing home care they need? Are you going to be able to find insurance after you have had a heart attack or cancer or if your child has juvenile diabetes and, therefore, has a preexisting condition?

I am deeply concerned after the initial look I have had, and we will continue to look at more and more of the details as they come out. This proposal is going to create chaos in the healthcare system. Frankly, I would say this is a mess. It is going to create a big mess as it relates to the families whom I represent and whom we all represent in our home States.

This was written in secret. We have all seen the stories of the Senator from the other side of the aisle who was running around trying to get a copy of what was going on. Everything was done in secret, and now that it is out, we find out that there is no cost attached to it. We do not know what the overall cost will be to taxpayers. We also do not know how many people are going to be able to get healthcare, who is going to be able to be covered.

What I have seen really falls in the category of creating a mess for families—higher costs for middle-class families, higher costs for poor families, but less coverage—such a deal. This is not the kind of deal that the people of Michigan want to have for themselves and their families.

To add insult to injury, it cuts taxes for the wealthiest Americans, while it makes most Americans pay more. It makes seniors pay more, and we have heard people calling it the ''age tax'' or the ''senior tax.'' The reality is, in a number of different ways, in how we rate, which is based on age and other costs, seniors will pay more. It is my understanding that, in the middle of this, there is actually a sweetheart deal for the CEOs of big insurance companies that will give them pay raises. This whole thing is stunning to me, which is being put forward with a straight face.

On top of everything else, it removes the guarantee for preexisting conditions. It is very unclear what will happen to someone who has had a heart attack. I have a new, little, baby grandniece who has had two heart surgeries already, and there is another one that she will have to have in another year. While she is doing great—and my niece and nephew deserve incredible admiration for taking care of little Leighton—she is going to have a preexisting condition her whole life. She is going to have a reconstructed heart that is going to cause her various challenges. Without the current guarantees that we have that she gets with her insurance, her folks are going to have a hard

time, and little Leighton is going to have a hard time her whole life.

When we look a little bit more into the details of all of this, we see, in fact, that this bill provides tax increases for millions of families. It repeals the tax credits in 2020 that help working families afford insurance. By the way, even though things do not happen immediately, in their knowing it is coming, the insurance companies are certainly going to find themselves making different kinds of decisions, and, certainly, families will make different kinds of decisions. I would expect the insurance system to be destabilized immediately. We are already seeing problems with insurance companies pulling out just based on the debate about repealing healthcare.

When we look at the tax credits—or help—for buying healthcare, it goes from helping those from low-, moderate-, and middle-income families being able to afford insurance to changing the whole thing. It is based on your age and your income. So the higher the age and the higher the income, the more taxpayer dollars you get, which makes no sense. A 55-year-old with a higher income will get more taxpayer funding than will a 30-year-old who is working a minimum wage job and has the toughest time in trying to find insurance that he can afford. This is not the set of values or perspectives that make sense for people in Michigan, as well as for people across the country.

While that 30-year-old who is working a minimum wage job is going to be paying more and hoping that he does not have a preexisting condition because he may not be able to find insurance at all, we see that there is a $300 billion—with a ''b''—tax cut for the wealthiest Americans. Picture this: Somebody in a minimum wage job who could very well see his health insurance go completely away will have that happen, while someone who makes more than $3.7 million a year will save over $200,000 a year. So $200,000 a year is what he will get back now in the form of a tax cut, which is more than what most people make. Certainly, the majority of people in Michigan make less. They work very, very hard, but they make less than $200,000.

Just to underscore, this is the first bill out of the gate here in which we are talking about any kind of tax cuts. We are already seeing Republicans cutting taxes for the wealthy while raising taxes on the middle class and raising their healthcare costs if they can find healthcare. These tax cuts are just the start. Wait until we get to tax reform, when we are going to see this whole debate happen again. My guess is that middle-income people are going to end up paying the bill—paying more—and the wealthy people are going to get another round of tax cuts.

To add insult to injury again, there are the sweetheart deals so that the CEOs of the biggest insurance companies can get pay raises—can get more money—while people will pay more if they work or are poor or middle class. There are tax cuts for prescription drug companies of $30 billion, but the bill does nothing to lower the cost of prescription drugs. This, certainly, is not healthcare for the majority of Americans. This, certainly, is not healthcare for those who need to have access to affordable healthcare.

Then it is back to our seniors, who will pay more because of the changes in how healthcare costs will be rated. We will, essentially, see older people having twice the tax credit but five times more the cost. I am not sure exactly how it is being proposed for preexisting conditions. We are still working through that. I do know that the bill has a penalty. If you have health insurance and, for some reason, there is a crisis in your family and, for some reason, you cannot continue it and you drop that insurance and then you reenroll again, there is a 30-percent late enrollment surcharge. You will be paying 30 percent more for your health insurance if you have a preexisting condition.

There are just two other items that are very important. I know that the distinguished Presiding Officer shares the concern about this as well, which is the fact that we have been able to create more access to healthcare by expanding Medicaid, which is critically important.

One of the great success stories in Michigan today is that 97 percent of our children in Michigan can now see a doctor—97 percent. We do not want to go backward. Every child should have the ability to see a doctor—every mom, every dad, every grandpa, every grandma. Right now, in Michigan, 97 percent of children can see a doctor because of the work that we did on the Affordable Care Act, including in the expansion of Medicaid. This goes away. It takes a couple of years, but that goes away.

Instead, what is proposed, essentially, is a voucher, but it has been called a lot of names. There used to be folks talking about a block grant to the States. Now they call it ''per capita.'' Yet it is really simple. Just like there have been proposals by Republicans for years to have a voucher for Medicare, now this is, essentially, a voucher for Medicaid of X number of dollars. If you need more for your nursing home care, then you are on your own. There are X number of dollars for your child, for a family. If you have something happen and you get sick and you need surgery or if you have cancer and it goes above that voucher, you are on your own.

It completely changes Medicaid from an insurance system to a system of, essentially, a voucher. Millions and millions and millions of children, of families, of seniors—the majority of seniors in nursing homes get their coverage through Medicaid—and our moms, dads, grandpas, and grandmas, who right now get quality nursing home care because of Medicaid, will be severely impacted by this voucher that caps how much care they will be able to receive.

Finally, for over half of the population—for those of us who are women—we will see a return, essentially, to a woman being a preexisting condition. Essential services for women—maternity care, which I was at the front of the line in fighting for, and prenatal care—are not available in the majority of private plans a woman tries to buy without her paying more. You can get maternity care, but it is not viewed as basic. It may be basic to you, as a woman, but insurance companies say: Sure, we will cover maternity care, but you have to pay more. Forever, women have been paying more for their basic healthcare. Under the Affordable Care Act, that changed when we said: Do you know what? As a woman, you should not have to pay more for the basic care you need.

Now all of that goes away under the House proposal. Just to make sure that we see women's healthcare taken away, Planned Parenthood is defunded. Yet 97 percent of what they do is basic care—mammograms, getting to see your doctor, OB/GYN, prenatal care, and all of the things you need for annual visits and so on. That is completely defunded.

I congratulate everyone who has been involved in the effort to make sure that birth control is affordable for women, and under the Affordable Care Act, we have done that. This is an economic issue; this is not a frill for women or for men or for families or for those who have worked hard to make sure we can lower unintended pregnancies in this country.

The good news is that we are at a 30-year low in unintended pregnancies, a historic low in teen pregnancies, and at the lowest rate of abortions since 1973—1973. Why is that? That is because women have been able to get the healthcare they need. They have been able to get affordable birth control to be able to manage their healthcare, as well as seeing the economy improve. But we are seeing more and more where more information is being made available, costs for basic preventive care is down, and women having access to what they need in healthcare allows them to be in a situation where we are seeing these historic lows on unintended pregnancies, teen pregnancies, and abortions.

I know in Michigan we have a number of counties across Michigan, particularly in rural communities, where the Planned Parenthood clinic is the only provider of basic healthcare. It is the only provider for family planning and for cancer screenings and basic healthcare for women and for many men. It may be the only provider in the community. More than half of Planned Parenthood health centers are in rural and underserved communities. About one-third of all of the women living in those communities where Planned Parenthood is available find that this is the only healthcare provider available to them.

So support for women, preventive healthcare, and Planned Parenthood funding are cut completely in this bill. Access to maternity care, prenatal care, and other basic essential services is eliminated. If you want that, you can pay more as a woman.

On top of that, we are seeing essential services like mental health and substance abuse services and other basic comprehensive services that we said for the last several years should be available—healthcare above the neck as well as healthcare below the neck should be viewed as essential services for people across America. All of that goes away with this proposal.

So, in my judgment, this is a mess. It is going to create a mess, with more costs, less service, shifting taxpayer dollars to the wealthy, while asking the middle-class and low-income families to pay more. This is simply not a good deal.

I would welcome the opportunity to work with colleagues on something that makes sense. Let's put aside this whole effort of repeal. Let's focus on how we can bring costs down, including prescription drugs, and continue to move forward, but let's not go back. When 97 percent of the children in my State can see a doctor today, that is worth keeping. That represents the best of our values. We can't go backward. The proposal we are seeing in the House would take us back to a place that would hurt the majority of Americans, and I strongly oppose it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, irrespective of how the Presidential election came out last November, we would be having a conversation about how to fix ObamaCare. There are many reasons for that, but most importantly is that it has just skyrocketed costs for people in this country. Premiums have gone through the roof, deductibles have increased, copays have increased, and out-of-pocket costs have become so extensive for people that even if they have coverage, they can't use their plans in many cases. So when our colleagues across the aisle talk about the recently rolled out proposal coming from the House—which they will be discussing and we eventually will be discussing—to try to drive down the costs for people in this country, that is what this debate is really all about.

You can say what you want, but the fact is that this year, 2017, premium increases are 25 percent in the exchanges—25 percent. In six States, the premium increases were 50 percent in the exchanges. I don't know how anybody—any family in this country—can keep up with those kinds of skyrocketing premiums. If you are buying your insurance on the individual market, the roof is blown off.

I talk to people in my State of South Dakota all the time who share with me the excessive amount that it now costs for them to cover themselves and their families. I talked to a lady in Sioux Falls recently, and she told me they are now paying $22,000 a year for health insurance. That is not working. That is why what we had was an abysmal failure.

In terms of choices, the whole idea was that people were going to have options out there. In a third of the counties in America today—one-third of the counties in America today—people have one option, one insurer. It is pretty hard to get a competitive rate when you only have one option. There is a virtual monopoly in a third of the counties in America today.

So we have markets collapsing, insurers pulling out, and we saw that last fall Blue Cross Blue Shield pulled out of the individual market in South Dakota and left 8,000 people wondering how they are going to continue to cover themselves with health insurance. The markets are collapsing, choices are dwindling, and costs are skyrocketing.

The Senator from Michigan was just on the floor talking about how terrible things are going to be under the proposal that is being considered and discussed in the House of Representatives, but the fact is, things are terrible today, and that is why we are having this conversation. Eight in ten Americans think ObamaCare either ought to be repealed entirely or dramatically changed, significantly changed. By any estimation, by any objective measurement or metric, it has been a failure, and that is why we are having this conversation, and that conversation would have occurred irrespective of what happened in the Presidential election last fall.

So let's be clear about why we are here and why we are having this conversation and why we are coming up with a better solution for the American people that will drive down their costs, give them more choices, create more competition in the marketplace, and give them a higher and better quality of care because it restores the doctor-patient relationship, which is so important, not having the government intervening and being in the middle of all of that.

THE ECONOMY AND REGULATORY REFORM

Mr. President, we have a recovery that technically began almost 8 years ago, but for too many Americans, it still feels as if we are in a recession. Americans basically have not had a pay raise in 8 years. Since the recovery began in 2009, wage growth has averaged a paltry 0.25 percent a year—one quarter of 1 percent increase in pay per year since 2009. Well, imagine if you are a family and you are looking at everything that is going up in your lives, whether it is healthcare, which I just talked about, or the cost of education or the cost of energy or the cost of food, all of these things that continue to go up, and you are getting a 0.25-percent—one quarter of 1 percent—pay raise on an annual basis. It is pretty hard not to feel like you are starting to sink and your head is going to be below water before long.

Good jobs and opportunities for workers have been too few and too far between. Millions of Americans are working part time because they can't find full-time employment. Even as some economic markers have improved, our economy has stayed firmly stuck in the doldrums. Economic growth for 2016 averaged a dismal 1.6 percent, and there are few signs that things are improving.

By the way, the historical average going back to World War II is about 3.2 percent average growth in the economy. So last year we were at one-half of what the average had been going back all the way to World War II.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office is projecting average growth for the next 10 years at just 2 percent—in other words, long-term economic stagnation.

The good news, though, is that we don't have to resign ourselves to the status quo. We can get our economy going again. Republicans are committed to doing just that. To get our economy going again, we need to identify the reasons for the long-term stagnation we are experiencing.

A recent report from the Economic Innovation Group identified one important problem: a lack of what the organization calls ''economic dynamism.'' Economic dynamism, as the Economic Innovation Group defines it, refers to the rate at which new businesses are born and die.

In a dynamic economy, the rate of new business creation is high and significantly outstrips the rate of business deaths. But that hasn't been the case in the United State lately. New business creation has significantly dropped over the past several years. Between 2009 and 2011, business death outstripped business birth.

While the numbers have since improved slightly, the recovery has been poor and far, as I mentioned before, from historical norms. The Economic Innovation Group notes that in 2012—the economy's best year for business creation since the recession—it fell far short of its worst year prior to 2008. This is deeply concerning because new businesses have historically been responsible for a substantial part of the job creation in this country, not to mention a key source of innovation. When new businesses aren't being created at a strong rate, workers face a whole host of problems.

''A less dynamic economy,'' the Economic Innovation Group notes, ''is one likely to feature fewer jobs, lower labor force participation, slack wage growth, and rising inequality—exactly what we see today.''

Well, American workers clearly need relief, and restoring economic dynamism is a key to providing it. We need to pave the way for new businesses and the jobs they create, and we need to ensure that current businesses, particularly small businesses, are able to thrive.

There are a number of ways we can do this. One big thing we can do is relieve the burden of excessive government regulations. Obviously some government regulations are important and necessary, but too many others are unnecessary and doing nothing but loading businesses down with compliance costs and paperwork hours. The more resources businesses spend complying with regulations, the less they have available for growth and innovation. Excessive regulations also prevent many new businesses from ever getting off the ground. Small startups simply don't have the resources to hire individuals, let alone the consultants and lawyers to do the costly work of complying with the scores of government regulations.

Unfortunately, over the past 8 years, the Obama administration spent a lot of time imposing burdensome regulations on American businesses. According to the American Action Forum, the Obama administration was responsible for implementing more than 675 major regulations that cost the economy more than $800 billion. Given those numbers, it is no surprise that the Obama economy left businesses with fewer resources to dedicate to growing and creating jobs or that new business creation seriously dropped off during those years in the Obama administration.

Since the new Congress began in January, Republicans have been focused on repealing burdensome ObamaCare regulations using the Congressional Review Act. We have already used this law to repeal three Obama regulations, and this week we will use it to repeal at least two more, including the ''blacklisting'' rule, which imposes duplicative and unnecessary requirements for businesses bidding on Federal Government contracts, and the Bureau of Land Management methane rule, which curbs energy production on Federal lands by restricting drilling. This methane rule would cost jobs and deprive State and local governments of tax and royalty payments that they can use to address local priorities.

Another area of regulatory reform we need to address is ObamaCare, as I mentioned. Repealing the burdensome mandates and regulations this law has imposed on businesses will go a long way toward removing barriers to new businesses and spurring growth at existing businesses.

Another important thing we can do is remove unnecessary barriers that restrict access to capital. Both new and existing businesses rely on capital to help them innovate, expand, and create jobs.

In addition to removing burdensome regulations, tax reform needs to be a priority. Measures like allowing new businesses to deduct their startup costs and reducing rates for small businesses would spur new business creation and help small businesses thrive. Republicans plan to take up comprehensive tax reform later this year, and I look forward to that debate.

The American economy has always been known for being dynamic and innovative, and we need to make sure it stays that way. We need to free up the innovators and the job creators so that the next big idea isn't buried by government regulations before it has a chance to see the light of day.

Sluggish economic growth doesn't have to be the new normal. By removing burdensome government regulations and reforming our Tax Code, we can spur business creation and innovation. We can increase wages and opportunities for American workers, and we can put our economy on the path to long-term health, where that growth rate gets back to that more historic level that allows for better paying jobs and higher wages for American families.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in both Houses of Congress to achieve these goals, and I am anxious for us to start passing bills that will put policies in place that are favorable to higher economic growth, better jobs, and better wages for the American people and their families.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, as we continue to debate H.J. Res. 44, a resolution of disproval to nullify the BLM planning 2.0 rule, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues an editorial published last week in the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel. It outlines many of the reasons we should oppose the repeal of the BLM planning 2.0 rule.

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The Daily Sentinel, Mar. 1, 2017]

ALIGNING VALUES

Colorado's biggest political guns are marching to the beat of the same drum, proclaiming the Centennial State is the perfect new location for the massive Outdoor Retailer Show which is leaving Salt Lake City over the extreme stance Utah's political leaders have taken on public lands.

Democratic Gov. John Hickenlooper and U.S. Sens. Cory Gardner, a Republican, and Democrat Michael Bennet sent a joint letter Monday to the Outdoor Retailer Show hailing Colorado's bipartisan commitment to maintaining and protecting public lands.

Considering that Utah is ground-zero for a movement to transfer management of public lands from the federal government to the states, it's not hard for Colorado to claim that its values are more closely aligned with the outdoor industry, which relies on public lands for its livelihood.

Colorado could enhance that claim if Gardner and Bennet refuse to overturn the first major revision of the Bureau of Land Management's land-use planning process in three decades.

Congress is seeking to overturn BLM's Planning 2.0 initiative under the Congressional Review Act. The House has already voted to eliminate the rule. If the Senate follows suit, it will undo an effort to increase public involvement, improve transparency and promote science-based decision-making in public-lands planning.

Planning 2.0 is not without its critics. The Western Governors' Association has asked Congress in a Feb. 10 letter to ''direct the BLM to re-examine the final Planning 2.0 rule. Any revisions . . . should be crafted collaboratively with western states.''

But there can be no revisions if the rule is repealed under the CRA, which is a ''nuclear bomb'' of a legislative tool. The CRA would not only overturn the rule, but block future rulemakings that are ''substantially the same'' without prior approval from Congress.

That means the BLM would be stuck with an antiquated planning process, hobbling the agency in a way that reinforces all the negative perceptions that already exist regarding the way it manages public lands.

Sportsmen's groups, the Pew Charitable Trusts, conservation groups and the Outdoor Industry Association all support Planning 2.0. The WGA wants to keep it alive to improve it.

Public lands are the backbone of the outdoor industry, which contributes $646 billion to the economy annually.

Gardner sponsored the Outdoor Recreation and Jobs Economic Impact Act, which was signed into law by the president last year. It requires the Bureau of Economic Analysis to calculate the economic impact of the outdoor recreation industry and requires the Commerce Department to provide Congress with a full evaluation of the outdoor recreation industry.

He obviously recognizes the importance of the outdoor recreation industry as a jobs creator and an economic engine. He should also understand that the industry equates killing the rule with hampering growth.

The Senate vote may have not any bearing on whether the Outdoor Retailer Show relocates to Colorado. But supporting 2.0 is a show of good faith that our senators get what's at stake.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I oppose today's resolution to overturn the Bureau of Land Management planning 2.0 rule.

The Bureau of Land Management is charged with ensuring responsible use of public lands, which requires extensive land use planning to balance priorities like recreation, conservation, and energy development. Planning 2.0 simply updates outdated planning processes that date back 30 years to provide greater community input and transparency. This is intended to create plans that work better for all users, including local communities. It is also meant to reduce the time it takes to complete the planning process.

Under the new rule, the public is involved in the planning process early to avoid costly and time-consuming disputes later. The rule allows for the use of current technology like geospatial data to allow for more science-based decisionmaking.

Developing planning 2.0 took 2 years and included consideration of more than 6,000 public comments. With today's resolution, we would abandon modernization that makes it easier for the public and State and local governments to be involved in the Federal planning process and revert to rules that were written in 1983.

A wide range of sportsmen groups, including the Izaak Walton League of America, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and Trout Unlimited have asked us to preserve Planning 2.0. They write: ''Stakeholders

from across the multiple-use spectrum agreed that the previous BLM planning process could be improved. Under the outdated process, opportunities for public involvement were too few, and the public didn't learn about agency plans until they were already proposed.''

If we pass this resolution today, BLM will have to go back to that outdated process and would be prohibited from proposing a rule that is substantially similar to planning 2.0. I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

TRUMPCARE

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, last night the Republicans in the House revealed their plan to scrap the ACA and replace it with something much worse—TrumpCare. There are so many things that are wrong with this bill. A lot of us are still going through the 184 pages and all of its implications, so it is impossible to encapsulate all the difficulties in this legislation in one speech.

I am going to highlight eight problems with this bill to start. First of all, this bill is a complicated and rushed mess. Despite the fact that they had 7 years to work on their own plan, the Republicans cobbled together a bill that makes no sense. In an effort to make everyone in their caucus happy, they have made no one in their caucus happy. That is why we have seen conservative groups—from AEI to AFP, the Heritage Foundation, the Koch brothers—come out and express opposition to the legislation.

Second, this bill cuts Medicaid. They are going to use a phrase called block grants, but I want everyone to understand that is cutting Medicaid. That is a euphemism for cutting the resources for Medicaid. This cuts a program that helps more than 70 million Americans across the country get the healthcare they need. It means less care for pregnant moms, less care for families with loved ones in nursing homes. Nursing home benefits will be totally trashed, and all of these changes will reduce Medicaid to a level not seen before.

By the way, Medicare doesn't escape the ax. It is also in trouble if we enact the House legislation. TrumpCare will actually move up the date of insolvency of the Medicare trust fund by 3 years, to the year 2025. That is not 20, 30 years from now when they talk about the Social Security trust fund. That is quite soon to have Medicare be insolvent, and they are accelerating the date in which Medicare becomes insolvent.

Third, this bill hits the elderly with an age tax. Here is how the law currently works. It is basically a cap on the amount that an insurance company can charge a senior for healthcare. It says you cannot charge more than three times the amount you charge a young person for a senior citizen.

It is capped at three times what you charge for young people. This would increase the cap to five times the cost. If a young person's health insurance costs $250, the maximum under the current law is $750. Now you are talking five times $250—$1,250 per month.

This is an age tax. If there is any doubt about how difficult this is going to be for senior citizens, ask the AARP. They are a bipartisan, well-respected organization that works in every State. Seniors across the country need to understand what this age tax is. You will pay more for health insurance if the law passes as it is.

Fourth, and this is a very important point. This is basically not a healthcare bill because if it were a healthcare bill, everybody knows it would require 60 votes. It would be enacting new legislation. This is a budget bill. All they can do, really, is cut taxes related to healthcare. This is a bill that cuts taxes for rich people.

How does it finance it? First of all, it finances—probably a lot of it by borrowing. The other portion of it is by cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. TrumpCare has special tax cuts that only benefit the highest earning households and another one that will go to insurance company executives who make more than half a million dollars a year.

You cannot make this stuff up. They are cutting taxes for insurance company executives who make more than half a million dollars each year, and they are financing it by cutting healthcare for the people we all represent.

Fifth, this bill will blow up the debt and the deficit. The crazy thing is, we don't actually know how much our debt and deficit will increase because Republicans are in such a hurry to rush this through without a formal CBO analysis. We have no idea how much this is going to cost—probably trillions, but they haven't even asked for a CBO score. They don't want to know how much this is going to blow up the debt and the deficit because all of the fiscal hawks will be found to be hypocrites who have been railing about deficits for all of their career. Yet this might be the biggest budget-busting piece of legislation in many, many years, and they don't want to know how much it costs because they have made a promise. They are going to go ahead and fulfill that promise no matter how ridiculous it is.

Sixth, this bill will trash mental health coverage. The ACA was a huge step forward for the mental health community because it required insurance companies to cover mental health and substance abuse disorders. We are in a moment when every State is struggling with an addiction crisis. What I don't know is why we would rip away these services when so many people are counting on it to break their addictions.

Seventh, this bill will defund Planned Parenthood because they can't help themselves in the U.S. House of Representatives. Planned Parenthood is a provider that offers healthcare to millions of women across the country, but this bill will stop low-income women from getting critical health services like breast cancer screenings from local clinics. Oftentimes, this would happen in communities where women have nowhere else to turn. Many community health centers don't have the services women need or they have twice the wait times that a Planned Parenthood would have. For women waiting to find out if they have cancer, that is simply not an option.

Finally, this bill is too partisan. I think we can all agree that our approach to healthcare could use some improvements, and I am more than ready to work with my Republican colleagues to make healthcare better. That is not just a rhetorical flourish. I have tried to back that up with my legislative actions. I have worked with Senator HATCH on legislation to increase access to high-quality care in hard-to-reach regions. I have worked with Senator CASSIDY and many others on a bill to create a public health emergency fund. I have worked with Senators WICKER, COCHRAN, and THUNE on a telehealth bill.

We can work together on healthcare, but it requires three things: No. 1, good faith, and there is no good faith in this piece of legislation. No. 2, bipartisanship. This bill, I am quite sure, will get zero Democratic votes in the House or the Senate. No. 3, we need legislative hearings. We need to have a conversation in the light of day and let the American people weigh in. We need to figure out what it is that they are doing to the American healthcare system.

If they are so proud of their plan, why no hearings? If they are so proud of their plan, why not get at least a score from the Congressional Budget Office? If they are so proud of their plan, why do they lack the confidence that any Democrat will support it?

Look, we do have the opportunity to work together to improve healthcare, but this bill is basically a mess. It is worse than I thought. I think it is worse than a lot of people thought, especially given that they have been talking about this for 7 years. So one might think they would have had a really well-thought-through plan. This has all of the characteristics of something that was rushed out the door in about a 48-hour period.

I hope my colleagues will join me in opposing this very bad piece of legislation and give us some space and time to do this right and to do this in a bipartisan fashion.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous request that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, TrumpCare is here, and you are going to hate it. This replacement for the Affordable Care Act has been 7 years in the making. On a cursory overview, it appears that when you ask the question as to who gets hurt under the replacement plan, the answer is everyone, with the exception of insurance companies, drug companies, and the very wealthy.

I hope we are able to step back and take our time to analyze what this replacement plan is going to do to Americans who badly need healthcare, who believed Republicans when they told them that they were going to repeal the bill and replace it with something better, and who believed President Trump when he said that he was going to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with something that was wonderful, that insured everybody who was insured under the Affordable Care Act and did it at lower costs.

I know that my colleagues who are well meaning in this Chamber cannot read this replacement plan and understand it to do anything but strip coverage away from millions of Americans and to drive up costs for millions of Americans. There is no credible way to look at this replacement plan without seeing the devastation that will be wrought.

I want to spend just a few minutes, now that we have had this plan to look at for 24 hours, talking about how dangerous it is and pleading with my Republican colleagues to take their time and, hopefully, decide instead to work with Democrats to try to strengthen the Affordable Care Act, fix what is not working as well, but preserve the parts that are working.

Here is what I mean when I say that everyone, with the exception of insurance companies, drug companies, and the superrich, is hurt by the GOP replacement plan. First, this idea that we are going to end the Medicaid expansion—that is what this replacement plan does. It says that in 2 years, effectively 2020, the Medicaid expansion will go away. That means in my State, 200,000 people will lose healthcare. Millions across the country will lose healthcare. They are, by and large, the poor and the lower middle class—largely women and children who can't get insurance other than through the Medicaid expansion—who will no longer be able to get it. Medicaid has been expanded in Democratic States, Republican States, blue States, red States. Letting Medicaid expansion hang around for 2 years is no solace to people who will jam into those years as much healthcare as they can get, but then be without it afterwards.

Even more insidious is the part of the GOP healthcare replacement plan that would turn Medicaid into a block grant after 2020. This has been talked about in conservative circles for a long time, but has been resisted, again, by Democrats and Republicans who understand what that means. It means Medicaid will eventually wither on the vine and will become a State responsibility. No longer will the Federal Government help States pick up the costs for insuring the most vulnerable citizens.

Remember who Medicaid covers. Medicaid covers 60 percent of children with disabilities in this country. Of the tens of millions of kids living with disabilities, 6 out of 10 of them get their insurance from Medicaid. If Medicaid is turned into a block grant, let me just tell you, let me guarantee you that healthcare will end for millions of those kids. If it does not end, it will be dramatically scaled back because States cannot afford to pick up 60, 70, 80 percent eventually of the cost.

Thirty percent of non-elderly adults with disabilities are covered by Medicaid. Sixty-four percent of nursing home residents are covered by Medicaid. Two out of every three of our senior citizens who are living in nursing homes are covered by Medicaid. If you block-grant Medicaid, all of a sudden States will not be able to pick up those costs and will not be able to deliver healthcare to people in nursing homes. That is just the truth.

The Republican bill effectively ends coverage for 11 million people all across this country who are covered by the Medicaid expansion after 2 years, and then it jeopardizes care for tens of millions more by dramatically cutting the Medicaid Program and the Medicaid reimbursement to States. This is not a game; this is 11 million people.

Remember, it is not a guess because in 2020 you will be reverting back to the rules before the Affordable Care Act. Before the Affordable Care Act, 11 million fewer people were covered under Medicaid. Even if States maybe hang around and decide to front the billions of dollars necessary to cover a few million of those, you are still talking about 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 million people who will lose insurance—again, people who can't buy it anywhere else. This is people's lives we are playing with—as I mentioned, 200,000 in Connecticut alone.

Do you know who else gets hurt by this replacement plan? Older Americans. It seems that older Americans are really targeted in this plan because although the underlying Affordable Care Act says that you can't charge older Americans more than three times that of younger Americans, this replacement plan changes the rules. It allows insurance companies to jack up prices on older Americans. So a 60-year-old would have their premium go up by about one-quarter. That is roughly $3,000, according to an AARP study. I don't know about the Presiding Officer, but a lot of adults getting ready to qualify for Medicare in Connecticut don't have $3,000 sitting around.

But it gets worse. Because the premium support is so skimpy, under this plan, that same 60-year-old in Connecticut would have their premium support—their tax credit—cut in half, from $8,000 down to $4,000. Do the math. That is a $9,000 increase in healthcare costs for a 60-year-old resident in Connecticut. That is unaffordable. There is just no way for anybody to say that for that 60-year-old living in Connecticut or living in Nebraska or living in California, that is better healthcare. Nine thousand more dollars out of pocket for a 60-year-old is not better healthcare.

The claim is that this bill will cover people with preexisting conditions, but because there is no minimum benefit requirement, the plans don't have to cover anything that you need for your preexisting condition. So, yes, they can't technically charge someone with cancer more, but they don't have to cover chemotherapy. The Affordable Care Act says insurance has to be insurance. There has to be some minimum, basic level of benefits so that everybody knows that when they buy an insurance plan, they are basically getting coverage for maternity care, for cancer treatment, for mental illness. Because this legislation strips away any requirement that insurance be insurance, maybe you get insurance if you have cancer, but it may not cover anything you have.

Of course the cruelest piece of this bill says that if you lose insurance, you then get charged more. Republicans are right that in the Affordable Care Act as it exists today, there is a penalty if you don't buy insurance. Republicans just do their penalty differently. What this replacement plan says is that if you lose insurance and you try to get it later on, you will pay 30 percent more. I admit that there is a penalty in the underlying Affordable Care Act and there is a penalty in the Republican bill, but the problem is that under the existing Affordable Care Act, the help you get to buy insurance allows you to buy insurance. That is why 20 million people have insurance today. But because the tax credits are basically cut in half under this proposal, it will render healthcare unaffordable; thus, more people will have gaps in coverage; thus, more people will pay the penalty.

So in the end, this bill really does not provide protection for people with preexisting conditions because they are not going to be able to buy insurance in the first place. They are going to fall into that gap, and then they are going to have to pay more. Even if they do have insurance, it may not even cover what they need.

All of this is made harder to understand because it seems to be one big excuse to deliver a giant tax cut to the wealthy. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that this bill would cut taxes by $600 billion for the wealthiest Americans. The Affordable Care Act was financed in part by a tax on unearned income for people making over $250,000 a year. I live in a pretty wealthy State—Connecticut—but people who are making $250,000 and a whole lot of unearned income are not amongst the most needy in our society. The average tax cut under this bill

would be $200,000. Why? Because we are taxing so few people who are making such big amounts of money, the average tax cut would be $200,000.

It is so hard to understand because when you do the sum total of parts that are moving under this replacement plan, it seems as if the biggest parts that are moving are care away from millions of poor people and the elderly and money going to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans. That is not hyperbole; that is just how this bill works out.

The biggest net result of this bill from the status quo is that millions of people who are on Medicaid today in a few years won't have it—those are kids; those are the disabled; those are the elderly—and a handful of very wealthy Americans will make out with enormous tax cuts under this legislation.

I guess it is no secret that this bill was crafted behind closed doors. Seven years in the making, and this bill was hidden from public view until yesterday. Now House Republicans are saying they are going to give the American public 1 week to look at this. No estimate of the cost—they are going to ram it through as quickly as they can.

I held half a dozen townhalls in the summer of 2009, when the tea party tempest was at its highest, where people really wanted to talk to me about how upset they were with the way the healthcare debate was going. One of the refrains that I heard in those townhalls was that Democrats were ramming through the Affordable Care Act. Everybody heard it. Ramming through the Affordable Care Act. It was on FOX News every night. It was part of our townhalls regularly.

Well, let me tell you what happened in 2009. The House process spanned three committees: the Energy and Commerce Committee, the Ways and Means Committee, and the Education and Labor Committee. The House had 79 bipartisan hearings and markups on the health reform bill—79 bipartisan hearings and markups. House Members spent nearly 100 hours in hearings, heard from 181 witnesses, and considered 239 amendments and accepted 121. The HELP Committee had 14 bipartisan roundtables, 13 bipartisan hearings, and 20 bipartisan walkthroughs on health reform. The HELP Committee considered nearly 300 amendments and accepted 160 Republican amendments. The Finance Committee held a similar process. When the bill came to the floor, the Senate spent 25 consecutive days in session on health reform—the second longest consecutive session in history.

So don't tell me that the Affordable Care Act was rushed through when during that time the HELP Committee considered 300 amendments, held dozens of hearings, and in 2017 there are going to be no committee meetings, no committee markups, no committee amendments, and barely a week for the public, for think tanks, for hospitals, for doctors, for patients to be able to consider the chaos that will be wrought if this healthcare plan goes through.

So I am on the floor today to plead with my Republican colleagues to step back from this potential debacle. This seems like it was written on the back of a napkin in order to rush something out into the public so that Republicans can claim they are fulfilling the promise they made, without thinking through the consequences.

Over and over again, I heard my Republican friends and President Trump say they are going to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with something better. I heard the new Secretary of Health and Human Services say that no one was going to lose insurance, that costs were not going to go up, and that the insurance protections were going to be preserved. None of that will be true under the current plan under consideration. Everybody knows it, which is why it is being hidden from public view.

Politicians love praise. We love good press. So if Republicans thought this was a praiseworthy plan, they would not be hiding it. They would not be trying to rush it through. They would be celebrating an achievement they have been crowing about for years—replacing the Affordable Care Act with something that is better.

This is worse for everyone except for insurance companies, drug companies, and the superrich. The superrich get a big tax cut, and all of the fees that were levied on the insurance companies and drug companies that were used to pay for additional expansion go away.

Tucked inside here, there is even a very specific tax cut for insurance company CEOs. I mean, think about that. Tucked into this bill is a specific tax cut for a select group of individuals—insurance company CEOs. I represent a lot of those CEOs, but it does not make it right.

I hope we will find a way to work together to try to strengthen the Affordable Care Act and fix what is wrong. The plan that was unveiled yesterday—I understand not by the Senate but by the House—hurts everybody except for a select few. I think most of my colleagues know we can do better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 3:45 p.m. today, there be 15 minutes of debate remaining on H.J. Res. 44, equally divided in the usual form.

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

DISCHARGE AND REFERRAL—S. 416

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be discharged from further consideration of S. 416 and the bill be referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, we are coming to the end of debate on the disapproval resolution for the BLM Planning 2.0 Rule. I would like to take just a few minutes to highlight the very broad support it has drawn here on Capitol Hill but really across the country.

Here in the Senate, I mentioned earlier that there is a total of 17 Members who have joined me in sponsoring our version of this resolution. That is nearly one-fifth of this Chamber. It includes every Republican from a Western State with BLM lands within its borders. These are Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Nebraska, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Nevada, Montana, even Kentucky, and the State of the occupant of the Chair, North Dakota, and Oklahoma, so a very strong contingent of Members who are in support of this disapproval resolution.

Across the Capitol, the House of Representatives passed this resolution with bipartisan support a couple of weeks ago through the leadership of Representative CHENEY of Wyoming. This resolution wound up with 234 votes in the House. That is a pretty strong vote.

The reason why so many Members of the House and the Senate want to overturn BLM's planning 2.0 Rule is pretty simple. We know what it means for our Western States. We don't like the impacts that it will have and neither do a wide variety of elected officials and stakeholders back home.

In my State of Alaska, I have heard from the Alaska Municipal League, the Alaska Farm Bureau, and the Associated General Contractors of Alaska. The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce wrote to ask us to overturn the rule. The Alaska Chamber wrote in support of our resolution because they said BLM's planning process ''has grown to be substantially lengthier, more confusing, and burdensome for stakeholders to engage in.''

We have heard from our leaders in the Alaska State Legislature, State Senators Pete Kelly and John Coghill, who have asked for this rule to be nullified, as have several of our Alaska Native corporations, including CIRI, Olgoonik, and Calista Corporation. The Alaska chapter of the Safari Club opposes it because its landscape-level approach to land management planning has the potential to withdraw and lock up even more land in Alaska.

Alaska's energy, mineral, and timber producers are united in their opposition to this rule and in their support of our disapproval resolution. We have heard from the Resource Development Council, the Alaska Oil and Gas Association, the Alaska Forest Association, the Council of Alaska Producers, the Alaska Support Industry Alliance, the Fortymile Mining District, and the Alaska Miners Association, and they all oppose BLM's planning 2.0 Rule because it reduces economic opportunities for Alaskans—those who actually live near these BLM lands, who know

the most about them, and who depend on them to provide for their families.

It is the same story in many other Western States, from Arizona and New Mexico to Washington and Oregon, to Montana and South Dakota. This rule affects all 12 BLM States, and those States just are not happy about it.

We have heard from about 80 groups so far that oppose that rule, and I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the list of supporters be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S.J. RES. 15/H.J. RES. 44

STRONG SUPPORT FROM WESTERN STAKEHOLDERS

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

American Energy Alliance, American Exploration and Mining Association, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Petroleum Institute, Americans for Prosperity, American Sheep Industry Association, Association of National Grasslands, Independent Petroleum Association of America, National Association of Conservation Districts, National Association of Counties, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Mining Association, National Water Resources Association, Public Lands Council, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Western Energy Alliance.

STATE STAKEHOLDERS

Associated General Contractors of Alaska, Alaska Chamber of Commerce, Alaska Chapter, Safari Club International, Alaska Farm Bureau, Inc., Alaska Forest Association, Alaska Miners Association, Alaska Municipal League, Alaska Oil and Gas Association, Alaska Support Industry Alliance, Alaska Trucking Association, Calista Corporation, Cook Inlet Region, Inc., Council of Alaska Producers, Fortymile Mining District, Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, Members of the Alaska State Senate, Olgoonik Corporation, Resource Development Council.

Arizona Association of Counties, Arizona Cattle Growers Association, Arizona County Supervisors Association, Arizona Farm Bureau Federation, Arizona Mining Association, California Cattlemen's Association, California Farm Bureau Federation, California Wool Growers Association, Rural County Representatives of California, Colorado Cattlemen's Association, Colorado Farm Bureau, Colorado Wool Growers Association, Idaho Cattle Association, Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, Idaho Wool Growers Association, Montana Association of Counties, Montana Association of State Grazing Districts, Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association.

Montana Farm Bureau Federation, Montana Mining Association, Montana Petroleum Association, Montana Public Lands Council, Montana Stockgrowers Association, Montana Wool Growers Association, Eureka County, Nevada, Nevada Association of Conservation Districts, Nevada Association of Counties, Nevada Cattlemen's Association, Nevada Farm Bureau Federation, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau, New Mexico Wool Grower, Inc, North Dakota Stockmen's Association, Association of Oregon Counties, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

Oregon Farm Bureau, South Dakota Cattlemen's Association, South Dakota Public Lands Council, Utah Association of Conservation Districts, Utah Association of Counties, Utah Cattlemen's Association, Utah Farm Bureau Federation, Utah Wool Growers Association, Washington Cattlemen's Association, Washington Farm Bureau Federation, Western Interstate Region of NACo, Governor Mead of Wyoming, Petroleum Association of Wyoming, Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, Wyoming County Commissioners Association, Wyoming Farm Bureau, Wyoming Stock Growers Association, Wyoming Wool Growers Association.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. This list includes our Nation's energy and mineral producers, the people who keep our lights on, who provide fuel for our vehicles, and who construct everything from semiconductors to skyscrapers. The American Petroleum Institute, the Independent Petroleum Association of America, the Western Energy Alliance, the National Mining Association, and the American Exploration & Mining Association are all opposed to this rule, and so are many State groups, like the Arizona Mining Association, the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association, and the Petroleum Association of Wyoming.

Joining them are many of our Nation's farmers and ranchers, the individuals who provide so much of our Nation's food supply, whether that is steak or whether that is milk or something else. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the American Sheep Industry Association have registered their opposition. The American Farm Bureau Federation opposes the rule and so do many of its State partners, including the Colorado Farm Bureau, the New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau, the Oregon Farm Bureau, and the Washington Farm Bureau.

Perhaps most critically, planning 2.0 has drawn strong opposition from local and State governments, the entities that are elected to represent all of the people, not just one specific interest. The National Association of Counties, the voice of county governments all across the country, sent a letter outlining their support for the disapproval resolution. Another group, the National Association of Conservation Districts, wrote that planning 2.0 should be repealed because it ''skirts the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and reduces the ability of local government involvement'' while seeming ''forced and blind to the many issues raised in the public comment period.''

Again, this disapproval resolution has drawn strong support from a wide range of stakeholder groups—energy, mining, and grazing, America's farmers and ranchers, State officials, local counties, and conservation districts. Everything from the Alaska Trucking Association to the Public Lands Council and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have all weighed in. At last count, more than 80 groups had asked us to repeal BLM's planning 2.0 Rule, and I am sure there are many others that are not included in that count.

We have heard such strong support because this is a misguided rule that will negatively impact our Western States. It subverts the special status relationship between the Federal Government and the States and local governments. It limits local involvement and local input. It opens the door for decisionmaking authority to be centralized at BLM's headquarters here in Washington, DC. It upends BLM's multiple-use mission by allowing the agency to pick and choose among preferred uses, while sidelining industries that provide good-paying jobs in our western communities.

I think there is broad agreement that planning 2.0 should be overturned. That is what we are here to do, and we will have that opportunity in just a few moments.

So I ask all Members of the Senate, including those who do not have BLM lands in their States, to consider the strong support this resolution of disapproval has drawn and to join us in passing it at 4 o'clock.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, we had a chance earlier today to talk about this Congressional Review Act resolution before us that I urge my colleagues to turn down. This resolution basically would negate a very important aspect of a rule that was put in place to help the public have more input on public lands.

The rule was pretty straightforward—common sense—to make sure that there was a lot of increased public input to bolster the decisionmaking process and to ensure that there are 21st century management policies in place.

There is nothing in this rule that was implemented in the last administration that erodes or takes away from the States' and local governments' planning processes and the decisionmaking they do.

So it is very important to me that we continue to have the transparency and openness and sunshine in our public planning. I think one editorial from the Post-Register from Idaho said it best. So I will read from it.

Resource management planning. Sound boring? Maybe. But if you are a Westerner, it definitely shouldn't be.

Resource management planning (RMP) affects how you can or can't use the vast swaths of public lands outside your back door for things like hunting, camping, four-wheeling, hiking, fishing, and rock climbing—a lot of the things you probably love about being a Westerner.

With a new Republican presidential administration in power and the GOP-controlled Congress rubbing its hands together in delight, ready to implement part one of its grand scheme for public lands—cashing in on

those resources—RMPs should get a whole lot more interesting to Westerners.

Since 2014, BLM officials have been toiling away, rebuilding the current rules for land use planning in a significant way for the first time since 1983. . . .

One important change is that Planning 2.0 would let the BLM take into account local impacts from the beginning.

Going on to read from the editorial:

The Republican-controlled House has already passed a resolution to strike Planning 2.0 from the books once and for all. The Senate will vote within days on whether or not they'll use the same sledgehammer—the Congressional Review Act (CRA). It's an especially diabolical weapon.

Once the CRA is used on Planning 2.0, it will be gone forever. It prevents future BLM rules for planning land use from being introduced if they are ''substantially the same.''

The utterly confounding part is why this rule is being picked on in the first place. . . .

Planning 2.0 actually mandates more local control, gives it more often and is a smarter, more elegant solution to sharing use of our public lands.

I couldn't say it better than that editorial. Local communities are watching. They want more sunshine. They want more input. They want a smoother process. They don't want lawsuits that take forever. They want us to work in a collaborative fashion, guaranteeing the public input of local governments, States, and our citizens in how we manage our Federal lands.

I urge my colleagues to turn down this resolution.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I yield back the remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. WICKER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

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

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 82 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	McCain	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Harris	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Heitkamp	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Udall
Donnelly	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Franken	Murphy	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Isakson

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 44) was passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 18, Seema Verma, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Seema Verma, of Indiana, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Seema Verma, of Indiana, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services.

Mitch McConnell, Steve Daines, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, Bob Corker, John Boozman, John Hoeven, James Lankford, Roger F. Wicker, John Barrasso, Lamar Alexander, Orrin G. Hatch, David Perdue, James M. Inhofe, Mike Rounds, Bill Cassidy, Thom Tillis.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the nomination be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.J. Res. 58.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 58, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 58) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I rise in support of S.J. Res. 26, a resolution to disapprove the Obama administration Department of Education's regulation on teacher preparation issues. This resolution is simple. It overturns the last administration's overreach into scores of States and territories, into thousands of college and university teacher preparation programs, and into millions of American classrooms.

Last night, I drafted a fairly detailed statement on some of the problems deep inside this regulation, but I have decided to skip past most of that. Why? Because the problem with this regulation is actually much more basic than all of the substantive problems in the regulation. This regulation actually makes the assumption that bureaucrats in Washington, DC, are competent to micromanage teacher training programs in America. That is what this regulation ultimately does, and that is absurd.

So I would like to ask three questions of folks who plan to vote to defend this regulation. First, do you really think that bureaucrats in this city know better how to run teacher training programs than people who have spent most of their lives inside actual classrooms with actual future teachers and with students? How many of you have ever run a teacher training program? Has anyone in this body ever run a teacher training program? Because I have—almost. I have spent a lot of my life around these programs. As a kid, with my dad, who was a lifelong public schoolteacher and coach, and I have been in many of these classrooms with him when he was getting master's and continuing education programs; then with my wife who is also a public high school teacher; and then I was a college president at a university that had multiple teacher training programs. I know Keith Rohwer, and I know the other deans of education that have been at Midland University and at many other colleges and universities across Nebraska. Yet, even though I have been around a lot of these programs in some detail, I wouldn't possibly think I am ready to decree all the details inside those programs from thousands and thousands of miles away.

Question No. 2, has anyone actually read this regulation that folks are going to say they want to defend on this floor? Because I have been reading in it. I will not claim I have read it, but I have read in it. This is the 695 pages of the regulation itself. There is actually a lot of guidance material as well, but I didn't bring that because I didn't want to have both of my hands occupied. This is the 695 pages of the regulation we are talking about today, and it is actually really silly. If you read inside it, it is filled with enough specificity that if you tried to explain it to thoughtful, generally educated Americans, I submit to you that you would blush. There is a level of detail and a level of specificity in this that we are not possibly competent to defend at the micro level.

Question No. 3, can the folks who think this is what Washington, DC, ought to be doing right now—please show me somewhere in this document, the Senate version of the Constitution—show me somewhere in this document where we are given the specific authority to micromanage local programs like this from here. Because, honestly—I mean this sincerely to my colleagues who plan to vote to defend this rule—I don't see how you can defend this document and think that this is conceivably our job from here. We are not competent to do this.

Now, a couple of qualifications are in order. Am I suggesting that all teacher training programs in America work well? Heavens, no. There are some that are fairly strong, and there are actually a lot that are really, really poor and weak, but having a good intention to make them better is not the same as actually having accomplished something that will make them better. Good intentions are not enough. For us in this body to act because we have compulsory governmental powers, we would need not merely good intentions, we would also need competence and authority. We have neither of those about teacher training programs.

Everyone in this body agrees that education is darn near the center of the future of our country. We all want and we need good teachers. Most of us can remember specific teachers who stood out because of her or his creative presentation, because of their unexpected humor, because of their charm and their compassion, because of their tireless drive, because of their inspired mentorship. None of us in this Chamber who has the privilege of serving our fellow country men and women regret or are unaware of the fact that the skills and the guidance and the abilities that we have are the function of the mentorship and the pedagogy of life-changing teachers early in our lives. We have benefited from and we need good, prepared teachers.

If we all agree teachers are critically important to our future, and since we all agree teacher training programs are important and we also agree that some of them aren't very good, the question would be, What would we do about that? What kind of debate should we have about why much education in America isn't good enough? Does anyone in this body sincerely believe that the big, pressing problem in American education is that there aren't enough rules like this coming out of bureaucracies in Washington, DC?

Because if you believe that, I would humbly suggest that you should go and meet with some of the ed school faculties back in your State and ask them if you can read them these 695 pages so you can tell them that we have the answers. Read it to them, and then please come back and tell us in this body that they agree with you, that what we really need is more 700-page regulations from Washington, DC, micromanaging things as specific and local as teacher preparation programs.

Oh, and one more thing, which is actually kind of big. This regulation explicitly violates the plain language and the congressional intent of the Federal education law that was passed in this body last year. You will all recall that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed in this Chamber with overwhelming bipartisan support last year. I think it got 83 votes. The act prohibits the Secretary of Education from prescribing ''any aspect or parameter of a teacher, a principal, or other school leader evaluation system within a State or local education agency'' or ''indicators or specific measures of teacher, principal, or other school leader effectiveness or quality.'' There is nothing ambiguous about this language.

In addition, the Higher Education Act is clear that the levels of performance used by a State to assess teacher training programs ''shall be determined solely by the State.''

This rule overrides State authority over literally tens of thousands of discipline-specific teacher preparation programs across the Nation, burdening States with a federally defined and expensive mandate. Under this regulation, States would be required to create elaborate new data systems that would link K–12 teacher data to data on evaluations of teachers and administrators in particular schools and then on to the data back into the teacher preparation programs. This regulation's goal would be to measure the success of teacher preparation based largely on teachers' students' subsequent test scores, and it would all need to be backlinked in the data. This is data that is not currently gathered.

Rube Goldberg is smiling somewhere because this sounds like a bureaucrat's dream, a paperwork trail monitoring all the strengths and weaknesses of some vast machine spitting out layers and layers of new data over which Washington's experts could then postulate and tinker. Again, I have no doubt the bureaucrats who wrote these 700 eye-glazing pages—pages about rules, about data to be gathered that States are not currently gathering—I have no doubt the people who wrote this mean well. I also have no doubt the people who are going to defend this rule as somehow commonsensical—then why is it 700 pages—also mean well, but those good intentions don't change the fact that what they have actually done in this rule—what they have actually done—is build a much larger requirement set of paper trails, demanding further burdens on our teachers, on our principals, and on the professors who are teaching teachers, and then require all of them to report back through new or expanded bureaucracies at the State level, though the States have not chosen to gather this data, and then pass this data on to a bureaucracy a couple of blocks from here.

These Rubik's Cubes of rules and data collection are not being done today, and supposedly we are going to make teacher preparation programs better by all of the specificity that comes from this rule.

The fact that these regulations will likely cost States millions of dollars to implement simply adds insult to injury. Let's be honest. Education is not some vast complex machine that just needs a little bit more tinkering from Washington-level intervention before it will be at utopia. It isn't true, and this rule is not an effective way to actually help the teachers who care so much that they are investing their lives in our kids.

Nebraska's parents and educators and locally elected school boards are better equipped and better positioned to tackle the most important educational challenges. They are better equipped and they are better intentioned, even than the smartest, the

nicest, and the most well-meaning experts in Washington, DC. If you disagree, again, I humbly challenge you to go and try and read this rule to elementary and secondary school teachers in your State and to those who are running the programs that train them. Read the 695 pages to them and then report back to us that they actually share your view that the really big problem in American education is not enough 700-page rules from educational bureaucrats from DC.

Good intentions are not enough. Federal intervention and reforms should never make problems worse, and that is what this rule would do.

I urge my colleagues to reject this rule and to rededicate ourselves to the duties that really and fundamentally are ours, to the duties the Federal Government is exclusively and monopolistically empowered to carry out because it isn't this. We are not competent to displace the expertise of the district and the State level, and we should not be trying to regulate teacher training programs from Washington, DC. We are not competent to do this.

Thank you for your consideration.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor actually on behalf of students across the country, and for those who are so passionate about their education that they want to dedicate themselves to teaching, and to urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution and support strong and accountable teacher preparation in America today.

While this rule may not be the rule that any of us would have written on our own, it is important.

Let me say at the outset that there are many great teacher prep programs that exist around our country, and they are doing a great job preparing our teachers to succeed in the classroom, but there are also teacher preparation programs out there that are struggling and need support to help make sure they produce great teachers for our schools.

Now, as a former preschool teacher and as a mom, I know how important it is to have great teachers in our classrooms, and I understand how a good education, with an amazing teacher, can change a child's life. I am sure all of our colleagues think back on that one special teacher they had who shaped their mind and changed their life. They teach us not only how to read and write and do arithmetic, but good teachers teach us how to think critically, how to be creative, how to form an argument. I know I am not alone in saying that I owe much of what I have to the quality of the public education I received growing up, and I have spent my career fighting to make sure every child in America has the same opportunity I did.

Unfortunately, too many teaching students today are forced to take out huge amounts of student loans to afford continuing their education so they can realize their dream. They are willing to make this sacrifice. They don't complain. The very least we can do for those who want to become teachers is to make sure they are actually getting their money's worth when they make an investment in themselves.

That is what this rule does. It helps make sure students can make informed decisions about the quality and preparedness of their education.

Here are a few of the ways this rule does that—and I am hoping my colleagues will see that this shouldn't be controversial. This rule strengthens and streamlines reporting requirements of teacher prep programs to focus on employment placement and retention of graduates. It provides information from employers to future teacher candidates so they can make an informed decision about their education by choosing a school that improves the likelihood they will find employment after graduation. It makes sure that prospective teachers can access this information they need before they take out massive amounts of student debt.

When teacher programs are struggling, this rule helps States identify at-risk and low-performing programs so States can provide them the support they need to adapt or adjust their programs and help their teaching students succeed.

There is one more reason I would urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution today. Simply put, it would put more power into the hands of Secretary DeVos, and many of us don't yet have the trust that she would use that power to promote the best interests of students in higher education. Secretary DeVos does not come from a higher education background. We don't know whether she supports providing information on teacher placement rates and retention rates before prospective teachers take out student loans. We have no idea what she would do if this rule went away, and I believe it would be too risky to find out.

By investing in our teachers, we are investing in our future generations. Our future teachers have the right to know whether they are receiving a quality education, and they deserve to know that before they take out massive amounts of student debt.

It helps to improve teacher prep program accountability and gives prospective teachers the information they need to make an accurate decision on which program is most likely to make them a successful teacher in the classroom.

It ensures that Secretary DeVos does not have more power to implement unknown policies that could hurt students and reduce the number of qualified great teachers in our public schools.

Without this rule and the information that it ensures, students will have a hard time finding a quality teacher prep program that will help them get a job after they graduate. I think that is simply wrong. We should be working to make sure teaching students have full access to information and options. This rule would give them less.

For all the future teachers out there, I urge my fellow Senators to vote against this CRA because every young adult deserves to know that the program they enroll in is actually preparing them to be a successful teacher in the classroom, and every student deserves to have an amazing teacher in every classroom.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS BILL

Finally, Mr. President, I wish to bring up one more thing that is very important to me—the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act—and a potential serious threat to it. It seems that Republicans are thinking about bringing to the floor another CRA that would eliminate the rule that provides States with flexibility and guidelines to create their State plans. I want to be very clear. I hope Republicans reconsider that approach.

The Every Student Succeeds Act is a critical part of our bipartisan education law. It is an important part of the civil rights protections it offers, as well as the assurances it made that every student would have an opportunity to succeed, no matter where they live or how they learn or how much money parents make. Jamming through that resolution would weaken it, and it would be a major step toward turning our bipartisan law into another partisan fight.

Rolling back the Every Student Succeeds Act rule less than a month before States have to submit their plans to the Department of Education will cause chaos and confusion in the States, and it will hurt our students, our teachers, and our schools. It will also give Secretary DeVos greater control over that bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act and give her the tools to implement her anti-public education agenda.

Secretary DeVos's lack of experience and expertise, as well as her damaging track record on school privatization, leaves her unqualified to implement this bipartisan law that governs public education and public schools without the important guardrails that rule ensures. Given her record and her comments, she would almost certainly push for measures that disregard key civil rights protections in the Every Student Succeeds Act and could allow unequal, unfair, and unreliable accountability for schools across the country.

The Every Student Succeeds Act rule is supported by Democrats and Republicans, by teachers and businesses, and by parents and communities. We should not go backward.

I urge my colleagues to reconsider moving forward with that resolution, which I understand they want to bring up later this week, and work with us to continue building on that bipartisan progress that we all worked toward for our students.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to offer a few comments about the House Republican bill that was just unveiled yesterday. Those who have been promoting it or those who have been working on this issue for a couple of weeks are claiming it is a new healthcare plan or a new comprehensive healthcare proposal—in essence, by their argument, a replacement if the Affordable Care Act were repealed. I disagree. I don't believe in any way it is a plan. It might be a bill, but I think a better description of it in terms of its impact would be that it is a scheme, not a plan. It is a scheme that will roll back coverage gains from the Affordable Care Act, which is better known by a longer name: the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Kaiser—one of the great institutions that track healthcare data and healthcare policy—told us that there are 156 million Americans with employer-sponsored coverage. Those Americans didn't have much protection before the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act with regard to preexisting conditions or annual lifetime limits—a whole series of protections for people that were not there before that.

This scheme, as I am calling it, will not only roll back coverage gains in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, in the process it will also devastate the Medicaid Program, leaving many of the most vulnerable Americans behind.

Another impact of this scheme will be to increase costs for middle-class families while cutting taxes for millionaires or multimillionaires as well as big corporations. It will raise the cost of care for older Americans and substantially cut funding for hospitals in rural communities.

How did we get there, and where are we going based upon the House Republican proposal? Last night the Republicans released their bill to ''replace'' the Affordable Care Act, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee will be marking up the bill tomorrow. I guess it doesn't require much reading to get to a markup tomorrow.

Usually when you introduce a bill, the bill is reviewed by Members of Congress. There is some public debate on it. There is some back-and-forth. And then a period of time later, maybe weeks, there is a markup. The committee engages in a thorough review of the bill, and the markup means they make changes. They add amendments or try to alter the bill in one way or another. That is a serious approach when you do this work of legislating on a serious issue.

Healthcare is about as serious and difficult an issue as there is. I think it should be accorded the serious review that the complexity and the consequence of this issue demand. This is not a serious proposal. It is a scheme, but it is also not a serious process that the House seems to be focused on right now. This process means the House will mark up this bill within I guess about 48 hours of it being unveiled, maybe less than 48 hours. That means there will not be a single hearing on the bill or getting the bill scored, which is a fancy Washington word for having someone tell us what it costs. There will be no thorough review, no serious review on such a monumental issue called healthcare and what happens to hundreds of millions of Americans.

At the same time, the markup will proceed with lightning speed, and there will not be any information on the record about an analysis of the bill that is thorough and serious, and of course we will not know how to pay for it and we will not have the score that will tell us how it will be paid for and what the cost will be.

It is hard to come up with the words, but the impact of this bill would be a disaster. If you are a millionaire and up, you are doing quite well under this bill. You are going to get a bonanza from this bill. You are going to have a great payday. If you are a child or you happen to be a senior or if you are a woman or if you are an individual with a disability or a chronic disease, you are out of luck. You are in big trouble. I would hope that those Americans would have the benefit of a serious review of a serious issue. If the bill is not serious, I guess they are going to ram it through. We will see what happens in the next couple of days.

There is one analysis that should be on the record. There are some that are hot off the presses. This is a report released today that I am looking at. It is about 2½ pages. They know the vote will take place soon in the committee—two committees, maybe in the House. This report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is moving quickly to keep up with the fast pace at which the bill is proceeding. I won't read the whole report, and I won't enter the whole report into the RECORD; I am sure people can go online and look at it. Here is the title of the report: ''House GOP Medicaid Provisions Would Shift $370 billion in costs to states over a decade.'' It is written by Edwin Park, who has been writing about Medicaid for a long time. Few Americans know more about Medicaid than Edwin Park and people like him who study it. I will read the first sentence, which gives you the basics of it: ''The new House Republican health plan would shift an estimated $370 billion in Medicaid costs to states over the next ten years, effectively ending the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) Medicaid expansion for 11 million people while also harming tens of millions of additional seniors, people with disabilities, and children and parents who rely upon Medicaid today.''

That is the opening line of this proposal, which I believe is a scheme. What does that mean for Medicaid?

One of the basic debates we will have here is what happens to Medicaid itself, and we will have a lot of debates about other aspects of the implications for the Affordable Care Act.

Here is what it means. It means that 70 million Americans who rely upon Medicaid—again, they are children in urban areas, children in rural areas, children in small towns who get their healthcare from Medicaid. It is a lot of individuals with disabilities, a lot of children with disabilities who benefit from Medicaid. It is also, of course, pregnant women, as well as seniors trying to get into nursing homes, because we know that a lot of seniors can't get into a nursing home unless they have the benefits of Medicaid. The idea in the bill on Medicaid that is objectionable, among other objections I have, is a so-called per capita cap. This idea limits Federal contributions to a fixed amount. If the caps are not tied to overall increases in healthcare spending, the net effect is fewer healthcare dollars over time so they can afford the tax cuts they want to have as part of this scheme.

We have heard a lot around here about flexibility, that States want more flexibility when it comes to Medicaid. I will tell you what they don't want. They don't want a flexibility argument to be a scheme that results in cuts to those States, where the Federal Government says: Here is a block grant that may increase or may not, but good luck, States, as you balance your budgets.

Of course, Governors and State legislators balance their budgets, and they have very difficult choices to make—sometimes choices the Federal Government never makes. That is why some Republican Governors took advantage of the Medicaid expansion and expanded healthcare to a lot of people in their States. That is one of the reasons they are worried about—and some will oppose this idea of so-called per capita caps or block-granting of Medicaid or the like.

If we have a proposal to cut $370 billion from the House, what does that mean for some of those groups that I just mentioned earlier? Well, we know that more than 45 percent of all the births in the United States of America are paid for by Medicaid, so that is a consequence for pregnant women and their children. One in five seniors receives Medicaid assistance by way of the benefit to someone trying to get into a nursing home. Medicaid also pays for home-based care for seniors and, of course, long-term care as well. What if you have a disability? Over one-third of the Nation's adults with disabilities who require extensive services and support are covered by Medicaid.

We know that in a State like mine—because we had a Republican Governor

embrace the Medicaid expansion, and then we had a Democratic Governor embrace it and really develop it and bring it to where it is today—we have expansion of Medicaid that resulted in some 700,000—that is not an exact number, but it is approaching 700,000 Pennsylvanians gaining coverage through the Medicaid expansion. And 62 percent of Americans who gained coverage through the Medicaid expansion are working. So we are talking about a lot of families and a lot of individuals who are working and getting their healthcare through Medicaid. That opportunity presented itself because, in the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid was expanded.

There are lots of numbers we could talk about. I will give maybe two more. Medicaid is the primary payer for mental health and substance abuse treatment. Medicaid expansion enabled 180,000 Pennsylvanians to receive these lifesaving services. If you are a Member of Congress and you have been going home and talking about the opioid crisis—and to say it is a crisis is a terrible understatement. It has devastated small towns and rural areas. It has devastated cities. It has destroyed families. We know how bad it is. Some of the numbers indicate it is getting worse, not leveling off. If you say you care about that and you supported the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act as a Member of Congress and you supported the funding that was in the 21st Century Cures Act at the end of the year, and you say you are working toward help for communities devastated by the opioid crisis, it is OK to say that, but you can't then say: But I want to support the House Republican proposal on Medicaid, when Medicaid is the primary payer for these substance abuse treatment programs.

I mentioned before adults and children with disabilities. Medicaid covers 60 percent of children with disabilities. We know the range of that—ranging from autism to Down syndrome, to traumatic brain injury, and many other disabilities or circumstances that I have not mentioned. For a lot of people, this is real life. It is not some theory that gets kicked around Washington, often by people who have good healthcare coverage as they are talking about cutting healthcare for others. We have a lot of testimony from what we might want to call the real world.

One of the most compelling pieces of correspondence I received in my time in the Senate was from a mom about her son. Her name is Pam. She is from Coatesville, PA. That is in Southeastern Pennsylvania, within the range of suburban Philadelphia. She wrote to tell me how important Medicaid is to her family and to tell me about her 5-year-old son Rowan. She sent me a picture of Rowan with a firefighter's hat on. Of course, he is fascinated, as we all are, by the heroic work of firefighters. Her story—I will not go through her whole letter, but she got news a couple of years ago that many parents get in the course of the lives of their children. She got news in March of 2015 that her son Rowan was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. The diagnosis was made by a psychologist who worked for the Intermediate Unit—meaning the institution that works for the school districts and helps to provide special education. Rowan continued in the preschool program and daycare program before and after school, but then Pam goes on to say:

> I was never able to find a daycare suitable for all of Rowan's needs. In late January of 2016, I applied for [Medical Assistance].

I will stop there for a moment to explain. Medical Assistance is the State share of the State end of the Medicare Program. We call it Medical Assistance. Other States have a different name for it.

Pam said she applied for Medical Assistance:

> After Rowan was awarded this assistance we were able to obtain wrap-around services, which included a Behavioral Specialist Consultant . . . and a Therapeutic Staff Support worker.

Pam goes on to say, and I am quoting her again:

> Without Medical Assistance, I am confident that I could not work full time to support our family. . . . [We] would be bankrupt and my son would go without the therapies he needs.

These are the therapies I just mentioned. Then Pam goes on to say, urging me as one of her two Senators to focus on her son, focus on her family when we are casting votes and having debates about policies that relate to healthcare and Medicaid. Here is what Pam asked me to do as her Senator:

> Please think of Rowan. . . . My 9-month-old Luna, who smiles and laughs at her brother, she will have to care for Rowan late in her life after we are gone. We are desperately in need of Rowan's Medical Assistance and would be devastated if we lost these benefits.

So said Pam about her son and about the importance of the Medical Assistance Program, which is known on the national level as Medicaid. I would hope that those in the House, as they are quickly marking up legislation that would have a huge impact on families like Pam's and many more—I would hope they would think of Rowan, think of his little sister Luna and what her challenges might be years from now when she would likely have to care for Rowan and answer some of Pam's questions.

There are a lot of questions that we have about policy and numbers and budget impacts, and they are all appropriate. But some of the most important questions we have to answer for those who are asking them are questions that our constituents are asking. And one of those is Pam. We have to be responsive to her concerns about her son and the challenges her son faces.

I hope, in the midst of debate, in the midst of very rapid consideration of a complicated subject on a bill that has been slapped together—in my judgment, too quickly—that Pam's concerns would be an uppermost priority in the minds of those who are working on this legislation.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). Without objection, it is so ordered

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this is my ''Time to Wake Up'' speech No. 159. In giving these speeches, I have come to realize that some of my colleagues seem to have a hard time wrapping their heads around the basic understanding of climate change. Some of President Trump's Cabinet nominees seem to have the same problem.

They say the scientific community is split on the issue. It is not.

They say the climate has always been changing. Not like this, it hasn't.

They say we can't trust projections and complex computer models. But overall, they have actually been right.

And, of course, they have the notorious ''I'm not a scientist'' dodge. Well, if a colleague doesn't understand this, then perhaps he ought to trust the scientists at NOAA and at NASA, at our National Labs, and at universities in Rhode Island and across the country—the scientists whose job it is to understand this.

I must say, in addition to trusting the scientists, I also trust Rhode Island fishermen who see the changes in their traps and nets and our shoreline homeowners watching the sea steadily rising toward their homes. You don't need fancy computer models to see the ocean changes already taking place; you just need a thermometer to measure rising temperatures, basically a yardstick to measure sea level rise or a simple pH kit to measure the acidification of our oceans.

Let's look at ocean acidification. The oceans have absorbed about one-third of all the excess carbon dioxide produced by humans since the industrial revolution, around 600 gigatons' worth. When that carbon dioxide dissolves into the ocean, chemistry happens, and it makes the oceans more acidic.

Carbon dioxide reacts with water to form carbonic acid. Carbonic acid isn't stable in ocean water, so it breaks down into bicarbonate ions, a base, and hydrogen ions, an acid. The increase in acidic hydrogen ions is the crux of the chemistry of ocean acidification. More hydrogen ions lower the water's pH,

and the lower the pH, the higher the acidity.

Regular viewers of my ''Time to Wake Up'' speeches or people who spent the night up with us while we objected to Administrator Pruitt's nomination may remember that I demonstrated this in a simple experiment on the Senate floor just a few weeks ago. I took the glass of water on my desk, and I used the carbon dioxide in my own breath. Blowing through an aquarium stone, I was able to show, with the help of a little pH dye, how easy it is to actually measure the effect of CO_2 on the acidity of water. With just a few breaths into the water, I was able to visibly make this glass of drinking water more acidic.

That little experiment is a microcosm of what is happening in our oceans right now, except, instead of bubbles blown through a straw, it is a transfer of excess CO_2 from the atmosphere into the surface waters of the ocean all around the globe.

Scientific observations confirm that what the laws of chemistry tell us should happen is actually happening. Massive carbon pollution resulting from burning fossil fuels is changing ocean acidity faster than ever in the past 50 million years.

Now, you start talking in big numbers, and it all goes into a blur—50 million years, compared to how long the human species has been on the planet, which is about 200,000 years. So 50 million years is, what, 250 times the length of time that our species has inhabited the Earth.

This chart shows measurements of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere taken at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii. That is the redline of climbing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. And it shows carbon dioxide in the ocean, which is the green measure, which is also climbing in tandem with the rise of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Finally, it shows the pH of ocean water in the sea. Of course, as the chemistry would tell us, as the carbon dioxide goes up, the pH comes down, and the acidity rises; the water becomes more acidic.

We measure that surface seawater on the Earth's oceans has, since the industrial revolution, become roughly 30 percent more acidic. NOAA predicts that oceans will be 150 percent more acidic than now by the end of the century. Coastal States, like Rhode Island and Florida, will feel the hit.

Ocean acidification disrupts life in the sea when those loose hydrogen ions we talked about latch onto free carbonate ions. Usually that carbonate is plentiful in ocean water. Shell-forming marine creatures, like oysters and clams, use this loose carbonate to help form their shells. But if the carbonate they need is bound up by hydrogen ions, they can't get enough carbonate to build their shells.

We have even seen acidification scenarios in which shells start to dissolve in the water. Shellfish hatcheries on the west coast have already seen devastating losses of larval oysters due to acidic waters. When ocean pH fell too low, baby oysters couldn't form their shells, and they quickly died off. Dr. Julia Ekstrom, the lead researcher for Nature Climate Change's 2015 study on ocean acidification, told PBS that it has cost the Pacific Northwest oyster industry more than $100 million and jeopardized thousands of jobs. Her research flagged 15 States where the shellfish industry would be hardest hit, from Alaska to Florida, to my home State of Rhode Island.

Toward the bottom of the oceanic food web is the humble pteropod. Pteropods are sometimes called sea butterflies because their tiny snail foot has evolved into an oceanic wing. In 2014 NOAA found that more than half of pteropods sampled off the west coast were suffering from severely dissolved shells due to ocean acidification, and it is worsening.

This is a pteropod shell degrading over time in acidified water.

Of course, we are here in ''Mammon Hall,'' where it feels laughable to care about anything that can't be monetized. We talk a good game here in the Senate about God's Earth and God's creation and God's creatures, but what we really care about is the money. So let's monetize this.

Who cares about this humble species? Salmon do. As the west coast loses its pteropods, that collapse reverberates up the food chain, and the salmon care because many of them feed on the pteropods. The west coast salmon fishery is a big deal, so salmon fishermen care about this.

Another foundational marine species, krill, is also affected by ocean acidification. In the Southern Ocean, nearly all marine animals can thank krill for their survival. From penguin diets to whale diets, krill is king.

A 2013 study in Nature Climate Change found ocean acidification inhibiting the hatching of krill eggs and the normal development of larvae. The researchers note that unless we cut emissions, collapse of the krill population in the Southern Ocean portends ''dire consequences for the entire ecosystem.''

Closer to home, the University of Alaska's Ocean Acidification Research Center—yes, ocean acidification is serious enough that the University of Alaska has an Ocean Acidification Research Center, and it warns that ocean acidification ''has the potential to disrupt [Alaska's fishing] industry from top to bottom.''

Turning to warmer waters, coral reefs are also highly susceptible to ocean acidification. A healthy coral reef is one of the most productive and diverse ecosystems on Earth, home to 25 percent of the world's fish biodiversity. Those reef-building corals rely on calcium carbonate to build their skeletons.

Since the Presiding Officer is from Florida, I know how important coral reefs are to the tourism industry in his State.

Coral depends on a symbiotic relationship with tiny photosynthetic algae, called zooxanthellae, that live in the surface tissue of the coral. There is a range of pH, as well as temperature, salinity, and water clarity, within which this symbiosis between the coral and the zooxanthellae thrives. Outside that comfort range, the corals get stressed, and they begin to evict the algae. This is called coral bleaching because corals shed their colorful algae. Without these algae, corals soon die.

The effects of acidification on sea life are far-reaching. Studies have found ocean acidification disrupts everything from the sensory systems of clownfish—those are little Nemos, for those who have seen the movie—to phytoplankton populations, to sea urchin reproduction, to the Dungeness crab, another valuable west coast specialty.

I asked Scott Pruitt, our ethically challenged Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, about ocean acidification. He gave these answers: ''The oceans are alkaline and are projected to remain so,'' and two, ''The degree of alkalinity in the ocean is highly variable and therefore it is difficult to attribute that variability to any single cause.''

Let's look at those answers.

The first answer is plain and simple nonsense because the harm to ocean creatures from acidification comes from the dramatic shift in ocean acidity, not from where along the acid-based spectrum the shift takes place. The observation he made is irrelevant to the question.

His second answer is no better. It exhibits purposeful ignorance of the role humans' carbon pollution plays in damaging the ocean, because the chemical principles at issue here are indisputable. You can replicate them in a middle school laboratory in any Florida school. As I showed in my little demonstration, you can replicate them even here on the Senate floor. Like its carbon cousin, climate change, ocean acidification doesn't care whether you believe in chemistry. It doesn't matter to chemistry if you swallow the propaganda pumped out by the fossil fuel lobby. The principles of science operate notwithstanding. The chemical interactions take place by law of nature whether you believe them or not. If you believe in God, then you have to acknowledge that these laws of nature are God's laws, the basic operating principles He established in His creation. But, of course, here at Mammon Hall, it is always about the money.

Any decent EPA Administrator is obliged to trust in real science and to take action to protect human health and the environment. I am deeply unconvinced that Administrator Pruitt will live up in any respect to those obligations, but I would welcome being proven wrong. Likewise, I similarly challenge my colleagues here in the Senate.

This Chamber and our Nation will be judged harshly by our descendants, both for our pigheaded disregard for the basic truths, the basic operating systems of the world we live in, and for the shameful reason why we disregard them. Mammon Hall indeed.

Mr. President, it is time for the Senate to wake up before it is too late.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, the House's plan to repeal the Affordable Care Act is dangerous and irresponsible. Just listen to Governor John Kasich, Republican Governor of my State, who says we should not be throwing 500, 600, 700,000 Medicaid beneficiaries—mostly people who have jobs and work in low-income jobs—we shouldn't throw them off their insurance. In fact, in Ohio there are 900,000 people—700,000 on Medicaid, 100,000 on their parents' healthcare plan, and another 100,000 on the exchanges—who would lose their insurance if the House succeeds and the Senate goes along in changing dramatically or repealing the Affordable Care Act.

My office is flooded with letters and calls from Ohioans begging us not to take away their care. Let me share some of those letters.

A woman from Beachwood, OH, in Northeast Ohio wrote to me on January 11 terrified of possible changes to the Medicaid system that helps fund nursing homes like the one where she lives. She writes:

I strongly believe changes would drastically diminish my quality of life and many other residents' in the nursing home setting. My care needs are currently well managed by qualified and caring staff members. I am a 2-person assist with dressing, bathing, and getting to the bathroom. I also require two people with getting dressed every morning.

Medicaid cuts would decrease the number of staff members. . . . Without adequate staff, I am afraid of extensive wait periods and frequent bathing accidents. . . . It would be very difficult to endure, cause embarrassment, while destroying my dignity in the process.

I am not as strong as I used to be. I have children who love and care for me and placed me in a safe environment. Living in the nursing home has allowed me to live a little better, smile a little longer, and enjoy my days with family members.

''Please consider,'' she writes, ''the people who will be affected the most.''

Understand that most Medicaid dollars—dollars that unfortunately Republicans want to block-grant or capitate in some way, whatever terms they want to use here, send to the States, shrink those dollars, and people like this lady from Beachwood will be the losers as a result. Understand again that most Medicaid dollars—two-thirds of them—go to nursing home care. ''Please consider the people who will be affected the most,'' she writes.

Another woman from Mount Vernon, OH, a part of the State where I grew up in Mansfield, wrote to urge us not to rip coverage away from individuals who are currently receiving mental health and addiction services. She writes:

As a constituent concerned about preserving access to lifesaving mental health and addiction services, I am writing today to urge and request your support in protecting the Affordable Care Act and preserving Medicaid expansion.

I work as a substance abuse counselor in Knox County and work with adolescents and women with co-occurring disorders. Without the Medicaid expansion, many of our clients would not be able to get the help they need.

Without ObamaCare, without the Affordable Care Act.

Without the Medicaid expansion, many of our clients would not be able to get the help they need.

Today in Ohio, 200,000 people are in the midst of opioid addiction treatment, and 200,000 of them have insurance so they could get that treatment delivered in the right way and have insurance because of the Affordable Care Act. This House proposal would just rip it away from them.

She goes on to write:

Knowing that they can receive help and healthcare often is one of the motivating factors for our clients to begin to make change. Their ability to access medications such as Vivitrol through Medicaid has been a strengthening point in the recovery process of many. With our teens, I have seen them be able to change substance use with the resources that Medicaid provides.

In other words, some of them are breaking their addiction and some of them are being cured because of the Affordable Care Act, because they have Medicaid.

Medicaid allows our rural and low-income teens—

And of the 88 counties in Ohio, 70 or so are classified as small town or rural, like the county I grew up in, Richland County—

many of whom otherwise would not be able to attend treatment due to transportation barriers—to attend treatment through public transportation. Working with these clients, you learn their stories. So many have been through unimaginable trauma, losses, and emotional/physical pain. Many have never had the support to help them begin to work through these issues underlying the substance use.

She is worried. The lady in Mount Vernon, OH, is worried, with very good reason, that these repeal plans would ''leave millions of Americans without access to needed mental health and addictions treatment in our state and communities.''

Most recently, a woman in Butler County—the congressional district of former Speaker John Boehner and some members of my staff, past and present—writes:

I am extremely concerned about the cuts President Trump and the Republican-led Congress propose to make in the Medicaid program and services for the developmentally disabled.

Her son is 14 years old. He was diagnosed with a specific type of autism. He is nonverbal, with severe cognitive and physical challenges. She wrote to my office how Medicaid has been ''a godsend'' for her and her family. Before her son received a waiver under the Medicaid Program, her family was spending $100 a month in copays for psychiatric medications alone. That is in addition to all the extra medical costs in caring for a severely challenged child. They couldn't afford the physical therapy he needs, despite having insurance coverage through her husband's employer. She wrote that Medicaid ''more than anything else, improved the quality of my son's life, and by extension, the life of our whole family.''

Understand that health challenges—especially mental health challenges but health challenges overall—in one member of a family afflict the whole family. That is something we should remember as this Congress seems to rush pell-mell into trying to repeal Medicare, trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

These three letters are three of hundreds of thousands that we received—hundreds of thousands of letters and calls that Members of the Senate are receiving. I don't understand how, when 20 million people will lose their insurance, so many Members of Congress, who themselves have government-financed health insurance—we have health insurance in this body paid for by taxpayers, most of us. Yet we think it is appropriate to pass legislation in part giving tax cuts to the richest Americans and at the same time stripping away Medicare benefits, taking 22 million people who now have insurance off of that insurance and proposing minor insurance for some of them but not nearly all of them. If we are people of God, if we are people who care about our constituents, how we can do that is just beyond me.

I go back to the quote from one of the people I read about today from Beachwood. She writes: ''Please consider the people who will be affected the most.''

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

Mr. President, President Trump declared this week Consumer Protection Week, but his proclamation has gaping holes. It ignores the many ways large corporations cheat consumers and the biggest tool Americans have to fight back.

Not once did the proclamation mention the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which has returned $12 billion to 29 million consumers. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau was created under Dodd-Frank 8 or 9 years ago. Not once does it talk about the unscrupulous lenders who targeted Americans with predatory mortgages before blowing up the economy in 2007 and 2008. Not once does the President's Consumer Protection Week proclamation mention the millions of fake accounts opened by Wells Fargo. Not once does it mention the shady outfits that set up shop outside the gates of our military bases and the payday

lenders and other unscrupulous lenders who set up shop outside the gates of the military bases because they aren't allowed on the military bases as they try to exploit our service men and women and their families.

Not only did the President ignore some of the most pressing consumer protection issues, his administration is attacking the most important consumer advocate indeed—the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Last week, President Trump's Department of Justice filed papers in Federal court signaling that it will argue that the CFPB shouldn't be independent. The President and White House want the CFPB under their control so they can weaken it, so they can help Wall Street, so they can take away some of its power. They think the President should have the power to fire the head of the agency for any reason.

The whole reason we wrote it to be independent was to protect it from a President who chose Wall Street over Main Street. It was Presidential Candidate Trump who sounded pretty good standing up to Wall Street and helping Main Street. If you look at the nominees, his appointments, and his actions so far, it has been exactly the opposite. He has been the president of Wall Street and at the same time exploiting Main Street. It means that what the President has proposed is that the President can fire his director for doing his job: stepping on the toes of special interests.

The CFPB works in part because it has an independent Director. The current Director of the CFPB, Richard Cordray from Ohio, has protected consumers, has returned billions to Americans who were cheated and who were taken advantage of by big companies.

The CFPB has an independent budget. Banks can't kill it by lobbying it and cutting off its budget. That is the point. People whom he has in many cases recovered money from because he represents consumers—those banks, those large Wall Street banks and other financial institutions, because of the way it is set up, can't lobby Congress to take money away from it and put it out of business. Special interests have relentlessly attacked the CFPB since the day we created it.

President Trump ran on the promise of protecting the little guy, but he hasn't followed through on the promise of protecting ordinary Americans from some of the wealthiest, most privileged special interests in this town.

If you are one of the 29 million Americans who received help from CFPB, you might know how important saving it is, but you might not know how important it is to especially protecting one group of people, and that is protecting our veterans and our servicemembers. The CFPB has an entire office that is dedicated to helping men and women who have served in uniform—the Office of Servicemember Affairs.

A couple of weeks ago, my Rhode Island Senator friend, JACK REED, was in the Armed Services Committee with the senior enlisted advisers of military services—the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines. Their job is to make sure our servicemembers and their families are getting the support they need. Every one of them had great things to say about the CFPB's Office of Servicemember Affairs—of the value it provides and the support it provides to the men and women who sacrifice so much for our country.

Senator REED brought up an alarming figure. A recent report estimated that thousands of servicemembers are forced out of service every year because of financial hardships—problems with their mortgages, with payday loans, with credit card debt. One will remember earlier in the presentation that I talked about how many of these financial groups set up right outside military bases. That causes a tragedy for these men and women who want to serve their country, and it causes tragedy for their families. It costs taxpayers $57,000 every time someone is forced out of service. Many other servicemembers lose their security clearances because of financial trouble, which directly affects the mission readiness that is brought on by shady business practices.

The CFPB is stepping in to protect these heroes who are often taken advantage of. The CFPB's Office of Servicemember Affairs is led by men and women who have served in the military and know what kind of help servicemembers need. They visit 145 military facilities across the country in order to help servicemembers get their finances straightened out and to hear about their concerns. They have handled 70,000 complaints from servicemembers and veterans about abusive practices by financial institutions. They have returned $130 million back to servicemembers and their families simply by enforcing the law and protecting those consumers.

The CFPB protects the men and women who protect our country. It protects all of us. The best way to celebrate Consumer Protection Week is not through words and proclamations, it is through actions.

We need to combat cyber crimes and identity theft, as the President mentioned, but we also need to combat all kinds of tricks and traps—loans with outrageous interest rates, for-profit colleges that promise far more than they deliver, lenders who discriminate based on race. The list goes on and on.

I urge my colleagues to join me in working to ensure that the CFPB remains a strong, active ally in the cause of consumer protection this week, next week, every week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

SILENCING OF POLITICAL DEBATE

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I am truly saddened that I must address what I fear is a growing threat to our Republic—the silencing of political debate by totalitarian mob violence on college campuses.

I was not in Burlington, VT, last Thursday to witness what happened at Middlebury College, but I would like to read from accounts that have been provided by two people who were, in fact, there and who saw these things unfold. They were the targets of the mob's violence. Their names are Allison Stanger, professor of political science at Middlebury College, and Charles Murray, the author of several groundbreaking books, including the work ''The Bell Curve'' and a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. America deserves and needs to hear their stories.

On Saturday, 2 days after the incident, Professor Stanger wrote on her Facebook page as follows:

I agreed to participate in the event with Charles Murray because several of my students asked me to do so. They are smart and good people—all of them—and this was their big event of the year.

I, actually, welcomed the opportunity to be involved because, while my students may know I am a Democrat, all of my courses are nonpartisan, and this was a chance to demonstrate publicly my commitment to a free and fair exchange of views in my classroom.

As the campus uproar about his visit built, I was genuinely surprised and troubled to learn that some of my faculty colleagues had rendered judgment on Dr. Murray's work and character while openly admitting that they had not read anything he had written. With the best of intentions, they offered their leadership to enraged students, and we all know what the results were.

I want you to know what it feels like to look out at a sea of students yelling obscenities at other members of my beloved community. . . . I saw some of my faculty colleagues, who had publicly acknowledged that they had not read anything Dr. Murray had written, join the effort to shut down the lecture. All of this was deeply unsettling to me.

What alarmed me most, however, was what I saw in student eyes from up on that stage. Those who wanted the event to take place made eye contact with me. Those intent on disrupting it steadfastly refused to do so. It was clear to me that they had effectively dehumanized me. They couldn't look me in the eye because, if they had, they would have seen another human being. There is a lot to be angry about in America today, but nothing good ever comes from demonizing our brothers and sisters.

When the event ended and it was time to leave the building, I breathed a sigh of relief. We had made it. I was ready for dinner and conversation with faculty and students in a tranquil setting. What transpired instead felt like a scene from [the TV show] ''Homeland'' rather than an evening at an institution of higher learning. We confronted an angry mob as we tried to exit the building.

Most of the hatred was focused on Dr. Murray, but when I took his right arm both to shield him from the attack and to make sure we stayed together so I could reach the car, too, that's when the hatred turned on me.

One thug grabbed me by the hair, and another shoved me in a different direction. I noticed signs with expletives and my name on them. . . . For those of you who marched in Washington the day after the inauguration, imagine being in a crowd like that, only being surrounded by hatred rather than love. I feared for my life.

The next day, on Sunday, the American Enterprise Institute's website published this account from Dr. Charles Murray.

Dr. Murray wrote:

If it hadn't been for Allison and Bill Burger [Middlebury's Vice President for Communications] keeping hold of me and the security guards pulling people off me, I would have been pushed to the ground. That much is sure. What would have happened after that I don't know, but I do recall thinking that being on the ground was a really bad idea, and I should try really hard to avoid that. Unlike Allison, I wasn't actually hurt at all. . . .

In the 23 years since ''The Bell Curve'' was published, I have had considerable experience with campus protests. Until last Thursday, all of the ones involving me have been as carefully scripted as kabuki: The college administration meets with the organizers of the protest, and ground rules are agreed upon. The protesters have so many minutes to do such and such. It is agreed that, after the allotted time, they will leave or desist. These negotiated agreements have always worked. At least a couple of dozen times, I have been able to give my lecture to an attentive or, at least, quiet audience despite an organized protest.

Middlebury tried to negotiate such an agreement with the protesters, but for the first time in my experience, the protesters would not accept any time limits. If this becomes the new normal, the number of colleges willing to let themselves in for an experience like Middlebury's will plunge to near zero. Academia is already largely sequestered in an ideological bubble, but at least it's translucent. That bubble will become opaque.

Worse yet, the intellectual thugs will take over many campuses. In the mid-1990s, I could count on students who had wanted to listen to start yelling at the protesters after a certain point, ''Sit down and shut up. We want to hear what he has to say.'' That kind of pushback had an effect. It reminded the protesters that they were a minority.

I am assured [he continues] by people at Middlebury that their protesters are a minority as well, but they are a minority that has intimidated the majority. The people in the audience who wanted to hear me speak were completely cowed. That cannot be allowed to stand. A campus where a majority of students are fearful to speak openly because they know a minority will jump on them is no longer an intellectually free campus in any meaningful sense.

I suspect that most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle may not necessarily be fans of Dr. Charles Murray. There is nothing wrong with that, but I am confident they at least would be honest enough and self-respecting enough not to condemn any scholar's work without ever having read it, like many of Middlebury's faculty members apparently did. More importantly, I am confident my Democratic colleagues would join me in denouncing the violence of the Middlebury campus protesters who sought to silence Dr. Murray. On countless occasions, I have heard my Democratic colleagues come to the Senate floor to condemn violence in all of its forms. Why would this time be any different?

We do not agree on everything, but I am confident that if Dr. Murray were invited to testify here on Capitol Hill—perhaps at a committee of the United States Senate—my Democratic colleagues would eagerly join in an open and respectful debate that would ensue as a result of that visit. I am confident they would reject any effort to silence or to do harm to those with whom they might disagree. In fact, I am confident that if any outburst like that happened, whoever was chairing that committee and the ranking personnel associated with that committee would immediately bring the disruption to a close so an open, honest, respectful discussion could occur within that meeting.

I know tensions are high in America today, and I know what it is like to be on the losing side of a bitterly fought Presidential election as we, as Republicans, found ourselves in just a few years ago in the wake of the 2012 election cycle and in the wake of the previous Presidential election cycle before that in 2008, but that does not and cannot give anyone the license to shout down a fellow American, let alone to physically assault him just because he holds a different opinion.

Democracy and freedom—the republican form of government—depend on open, tolerant, and civil political discourse, and sustaining our democratic freedoms is, perhaps, the sole reason the government subsidizes institutions of higher education in this country.

It is embarrassing that teachers and students at an elite college like Middlebury should need reminding, but speech is not violence, and violence is not speech. Totalitarians who fail to recognize this core fact of decency and tolerance are goose-stepping into some of the darkest corners of the human heart.

If there is anything that should unite us in these polarized times, it is that the kind of violence we saw on Middlebury's campus last week must not be tolerated. That is why I commend the 44 Middlebury College professors who have signed a ''Statement of Principles'' on ''Free Inquiry on Campus.'' I hope more Middlebury professors will join them. In any event, I hope all Americans will join them in standing up for free, open, honest, respectful debate.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES THOMAS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments to acknowledge Charles Thomas, a veteran broadcast journalist and political reporter. Last week, after a career spanning four decades, Charles Thomas appeared in his final newscast at ABC 7 Chicago.

Born in Webster Groves, MO, Charles grew up in the St. Louis area and graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism. Shortly after graduation, Charles began his career as a radio reporter at KCMO in Kansas City. He has also worked in news stations in San Francisco and Philadelphia before becoming the ABC News bureau Midwest correspondent in St. Louis. In 1991, Charles was hired as a general assignment reporter at ABC 7 Chicago and later named to the coveted position of political reporter in 2009.

Since joining ABC 7's ''Eyewitness News'' in 1991, its newscast was and remains the most watched TV news in Chicago. On Charles's 25th anniversary at the station, he said: ''I am very blessed to have worked here and like to think that my efforts have had something to do with that success.'' As an avid viewer, I am here to say it has. His unique perspective and keen ability to tell stories make him invaluable to any newsroom. Let me tell you, Charles asks the tough questions and holds us all accountable. As the politician often in the crosshairs, I can tell you I knew Charles was always prepared and ready to challenge any weak response. I speak for all of Chicago when I say Charles Thomas will be missed.

For more than a quarter century, Charles has covered the biggest stories in the country—the OJ Simpson Trial, Oklahoma City bombing, Rodney King trials, Great Chicago Flood, and the election of the first African-American President, to name just a few. He truly had a front row seat to history. He even joined then-Senator Barack Obama on a trip to Africa in 2006. His remarkable career has taken him to every State in America and five continents, and he leaves with no regrets. Reflecting on his years covering national, State, and local politics, he said: ''Without a moment's hesitation, I can look back and say I had the best TV reporting job in America.''

Charles Thomas has had an amazing career. His work earned him two Emmy awards for reporting in 1983 and 1992. Although he is retiring, Charles is not done telling stories. He plans to explore digital storytelling focusing on the African-American community, celebrating positive stories often missing in local and national broadcasts—what a noble and necessary endeavor. I am heartened that Charles will remain an inspirational voice in the community.

I want to congratulate Charles Thomas on his distinguished career and thank him for his outstanding service to the people of Chicago. I especially want to thank Charles's wife, Maria, and their three children for sharing so much of their husband and father with our community. I wish him and his family all the best in their next chapter.

PROTECTING YOUNG VICTIMS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE ACT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, yesterday I introduced the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act, a bill to protect young athletes who participate in the U.S. amateur ranks from sexual abuse.

Before last summer's Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, the Indianapolis Star published an investigative piece that revealed that amateur gymnasts were sexually abused in gyms all across the country. No one knew how widespread the problem was in that sport.

But throughout the investigation, the Indianapolis Star tallied—after reviewing police files and court cases across the country—368 gymnasts who alleged they were sexually abused over a 20-year time period.

Kids as young as 6 were secretly photographed in the nude by coaches. Young athletes were molested by coaches during ''therapy'' sessions. Sexual predators spent countless hours with children one-on-one and abused them for years before anything was done. These accounts were devastating. And they were just the tip of the iceberg.

After reviewing this report, I, along with my colleagues Senator LEAHY, Senator BLUMENTHAL, and Senator DONNELLY, wrote to USA Gymnastics to urge the organization to do more to protect their young athletes.

Specifically, we urged the organization to update its policies and require that all members—including coaches, athletes, and others—immediately report to law enforcement when there is an incident of sexual abuse committed against an athlete.

After we sent the letter, several sexual abuse victims from California reached out to my staff. They revealed that they were abused by individuals affiliated with USA Gymnastics. I told my staff that I had to meet them.

Six brave women, who were each abused as young gymnasts at various points in their careers, then travelled across the country to share their testimonies with me. Two athletes from another sport who were sexually abused also joined us. I will never forget their faces that day. When I walked into the room, I could sense the overwhelming devastation wrought on their lives.

One by one, they shared their hopes and dreams as young athletes. The gymnasts talked about how, while pursuing future Olympic glory, they put their complete faith in the USA Gymnastics infrastructure. They fully trusted the coaches and doctors who had the USA Gymnastics seal of approval. And it was in this environment that they were sexually exploited by those whom they trusted.

Several of the women had been abused repeatedly—over the course of months and years—by a USA Gymnastics team doctor named Larry Nassar. Nassar is currently being prosecuted for a number of horrific crimes against children. One of those brave women was Jamie Dantzscher, a retired gymnast who won the bronze medal competing in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. Jamie told me how she trained as a young girl in California. When she was 13 years old, she was thrilled to be invited to train with the national USA Gymnastics team. It was with the national team that Nassar gained her trust. Nassar became her ''buddy,'' in the midst of an intense training environment. With USA Gymnastics backing him as a famous doctor and trainer, Jamie felt that there was absolutely no reason to believe Nassar was not trustworthy.

So when Jamie went to see Nassar for back pain, she was confused when Nassar began to touch her in inappropriate places. She was 13 and 14 years old. As she described the abuse to me in graphic detail, the other women around the room began to sob quietly. The tactics that Nassar used were too familiar to them.

And for the longest time, each of the victims believed that their horrific experiences were one-off events, that they were isolated in their own subjective memories. But the sharing of their stories—together in that room with me and the others—affirmed to them that what they had experienced was wrong.

One of the other gymnasts who bravely shared her story with me was Jeanette Antolin, who competed on the national team in the late nineties. Hailing from southern California, Jeanette shared how she was incredibly fearful of ever saying anything about the abuse committed against her because she believed she was being treated by a world-class doctor with USA Gymnastics' approval. As an aspiring Olympian, she feared that if she complained about anything, it would affect her career.

The same fears had overcome Jessica Howard, a rhythmic gymnast who was 15 years old when Nassar began abusing her. She was sent to Nassar for hip problems, and he told her that she should not wear any underwear for her treatment. At the time, she was confused and afraid to say anything to anyone. She believed she would be prevented from pursuing her dreams if she said anything.

I also met Doe Yamashiro from southern California. Doe was sexually abused by a 1984 Olympic Coach named Don Peters. In the mid-1980s, Coach Peters began fondling Doe and then had sex with her. Doe told me and the group of the pain and anguish she still suffers from many years later. The same pain and devastation was felt by all of the young victims who were in the room.

One of the common themes I heard from their stories was not just the predatory behavior of the perpetrators, but also how the USA Gymnastics institution failed to protect them. One of the women told me how she heard USA Gymnastics officials say at one point that it was their top priority to obtain ''medals and money'' and that a ''reputation of a coach'' should not be tarnished by an allegation raised by a victim.

This shocked me, and as I dug deeper into the USA Gymnastics institution, which is considered a ''national governing body'' under Federal law and oversees over 3,000 gymnasiums nationwide, I saw that their policies made it harder for victims, rather than easier, to report incidents of abuse. Their bylaws stated, for example, that the only way for a member athlete to ''effectively'' make a complaint about a coach was through a signed, written complaint.

Furthermore, USA Gymnastics' policy indicated that the organization ''may'' report sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities if a child's safety was at risk, but it was not mandatory. It further stated that it complied with State mandatory reporting laws, but if a State law didn't require anything more, there was no other obligation to do anything else.

It is my strong belief that these arcane policies left children vulnerable to the advances of sexual predators and failed to protect them even when incidents came to light. For example, in reviewing USA Gymnastics' history in public accounts, there were multiple instances where gymnastics coaches were convicted of heinous child sex crimes, years after USA Gymnastics had received complaints about those coaches. In other words, USA Gymnastics appears to have sat on reports of sexual abuse for years, while predators continued to prey on children.

At the end of my meeting with the survivors, I looked at each of them and told them that I would work on legislation to protect other kids and amateur athletes like them from sexual predators.

The legislation we have introduced does three main things to help child sex abuse survivors. It is a strong bipartisan bill, and I want to extend my deepest thanks to those Members who have worked with me on it, including Senators COLLINS, GRASSLEY, DONNELLY, NELSON, BLUMENTHAL, FLAKE, MCCASKILL, ERNST, KLOBUCHAR, SHAHEEN, WARREN, HARRIS, CORTEZ-MASTO, RUBIO, and YOUNG.

The first thing the bill does is to mandate that any person affiliated with USA Gymnastics or other national governing bodies immediately report child abuse, including sexual abuse, to local or Federal law enforcement. This requirement would apply not only to USA Gymnastics, but to each of the other 47 national governing bodies that oversee various Olympic sports, including USA Taekwondo, USA Speed Skating, USA Swimming, and USA Cycling. It is absolutely imperative that a bright line be drawn for all those working with national governing bodies that, once there are facts giving rise to suspect child or sex abuse, a report must be made as soon as possible to proper authorities. This bill mandates that.

Second, this bill strengthens Masha's law, which was named after a 5-year-old Russian orphan who was adopted by an American man only to be raped and sexually abused by him for 6 years until he was finally caught by the FBI in 2003. Her adoptive father had not only abused her, but he had also produced over 200 sexually explicit images of that abuse. Masha's law allows civil suits by minors against sex abuse perpetrators who violate a variety of crimes against children, including sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, and child pornography crimes.

This law is significant for victims to obtain justice because there are times when criminal cases against perpetrators are declined due to difficulties in proving a criminal case. Therefore, for many traumatized victims, the only avenue for them to ever seek justice against their perpetrators is through Masha's law or other civil remedies.

The bill, therefore, updates Masha's law to help victims. It clarifies, for example, that victims of child sex crimes are entitled to statutory damages of $150,000 and possible punitive damages, due to the particularly severe nature of the crimes.

The bill also extends the statute of limitations for Masha's law. The statute of limitations extension is part of legislation that Senator CORNYN and I have worked on over the past couple of years, called the Extending Justice for Sex Crime Victims Act.

Finally, the bill makes reforms to the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, which establishes ''national governing bodies'' like USA Gymnastics. The Stevens Act specifically lists the authorities and duties of national governing bodies.

When I first wrote to USA Gymnastics about its poor handling of sexual abuse allegations, they replied that the Stevens Act limits their abilities to fully protect athletes from sexual abuse, so this bill fixes that. It requires national governing bodies like USA Gymnastics to develop for each of its members: specific policies and procedures for the mandatory reporting of sex abuse to law enforcement, policies and procedures to keep track of coaches who leave one gym due to complaints and then go to another gym and repeat cycles of abuse, policies to ensure that minors and amateur athletes are not in one-on-one situations with adults, policies to facilitate reporting of sex abuse allegations to national governing bodies and other authorities, and stronger oversight and enforcement policies so that the national governing bodies take a greater role in making sure that the policies are actually being implemented and enforced throughout the country.

These provisions give national governing bodies like USA Gymnastics absolutely no excuse to make sure that all members are subjected to the strongest training and procedures to prevent sexual abuse.

It further forces organizations like USA Gymnastics to impact the culture of their sports, through various oversight mechanisms, to make sure that all members of such organizations adhere to the strictest standards when it comes to sexual abuse prevention.

Finally, I would like to close with this. All over the country, victims of sexual abuse are coming forward to disclose how they were abused and exploited at the height of their innocence when they were children. Multiple victims from California and throughout the country have, for example, contacted my office and described with great courage their pain and anguish. Rather than list statistics, I want you to know that each of these individual stories represents an untold amount of pain and suffering that reverberates throughout generations, leaving devastation in its path. I urge my colleagues in this body to work with me and the sponsors of this bill to pass this important legislation to protect victims.

I would also like to acknowledge the support for this bill from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, National Children's Alliance, Rights4Girls, University of Utah Law Professor Paul Cassell, Child Sex Crime Victims' Lawyer James Marsh, Crime Victims Expert Steve Twist, National Crime Victims Center, Child USA, National Association of VOCA Administrators, National Organization for Victim Assistance, ToPrevail, ChampionWomen, National Children's Advocacy Center, National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, the National Association to Protect Children, and the Rape Abuse & Incest National Network.

They are on the front lines of this work, and I greatly appreciate their support.

Thank you very much.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today I wish to support the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act of 2017. I commend Senator FEINSTEIN for her leadership on this bill and for shining a spotlight on the atrocious crimes perpetrated against young American athletes.

Sexual abuse is a heinous crime that must be eradicated in every corner of our society. I have long worked to prevent sexual assault and ensure that survivors have access to the resources and support they need. Last year, the Indianapolis Star reported on allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct made against coaches, gym owners, and other adults affiliated with USA Gymnastics over several decades. These very serious allegations included sexual abuse against young athletes. Predatory coaches were allowed to move from gym to gym, undetected by a lax system of oversight. The investigation also revealed that officials at USA Gymnastics, one of America's most prominent Olympic organizations, failed to alert police to many incidents of sexual abuse that occurred on their watch.

These crimes have hurt hundreds of victims across various sports. This Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Assault Act would require amateur athletic governing bodies, such as USA Gymnastics and other U.S. Olympic organizations, to promptly report every allegation of sexual abuse to the proper authorities. This legislation would help survivors receive justice and protect more people from becoming victims.

In addition, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Assault Act would require these national governing bodies to develop robust policies and procedures for mandatory reporting to law enforcement and to develop training and oversight practices to prevent abuse. This bill would also bolster Masha's Law, the law that lets minors bring civil suits against sexual predators and extends the statute of limitations for such cases.

The young athletes who train to represent our country at the top levels of competition and those at all levels who aspire to compete should not have to fear victimization by trusted coaches and sports officials. I want to again thank Senator FEINSTEIN for her leadership on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 51312(b), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Board of Visitors to the United States Merchant Marine Academy: Mr. SUOZZI of New York.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 46. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of Fort Ontario in the State of New York; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 428. An act to survey the gradient boundary along the Red River in the States of Oklahoma and Texas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 560. An act to amend the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Improvement Act to provide access to certain vehicles serving residents of municipalities adjacent to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following bill was discharged from the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship and referred as indicated:

S. 416. A bill to amend the Small Business Investment Incentive Act of 1980 to require an annual review by the Securities and Exchange Commission of the annual government-business forum on capital formation; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–926. A communication from the Associate General Counsel, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, twelve (12) reports relative to vacancies in the Department of Agriculture, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–927. A communication from the Acting Secretary of the Army, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on gifts made for the benefit of military musical units; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–928. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, the National Defense Stockpile (NDS) Annual Materials Plan (AMP) for fiscal year 2018 and the succeeding four years, fiscal years 2019 - 2022; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–929. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Exhibit Hyperlinks and HTML Format'' (RIN3235–AL95) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–930. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Temporary General License: Extension of Validity'' (RIN0694–AG82) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–931. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 13694 of April 1, 2015, with respect to significant malicious cyber-enabled activities; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–932. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Use of Ozone Depleting Substances'' ((RIN0910–AH36) (Docket No. FDA–2015–N–1355)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–933. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management project; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–934. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Office of New Reactors, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Operator Licensing Examination Standards for Power Reactors'' (NUREG–1021, Rev. 11) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–935. A communication from the Acting United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, the 2017 Trade Policy Agenda and 2016 Annual Report of the President of the United States on the Trade Agreements Program; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–936. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report certifying for fiscal year 2017 that no United Nations agency or United Nations affiliated agency grants any official status, accreditation, or recognition to any organization which promotes and condones or seeks the legalization of pedophilia, or which includes as a subsidiary or member any such organization; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–937. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2017–0013 - 2017–0031); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–938. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to Executive Order 13313 of July 31, 2003, a semiannual report detailing telecommunications-related payments made to Cuba pursuant to Department of the Treasury licenses; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–939. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report prepared by the Department of State on progress toward a negotiated solution of the Cyprus question covering the period October 1, 2016, through November 30, 2016; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–940. A communication from the Director of Regulations and Policy Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Gastroenterology-Urology Devices; Manual Gastroenterology-Urology Surgical Instruments and Accessories'' (Docket No. FDA–2016–N–4661) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–941. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''340B Drug Pricing Program Ceiling Price and Manufacturer Civil Monetary Penalties; Delay of Effective Date'' (RIN0906–AA89) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–942. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to South Sudan that was declared in Executive Order 13664 of April 3, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–943. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–645, ''Four-unit Rental Housing Tenant Grandfathering Amendment Act of 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–944. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–646, ''At-Risk Tenant Protection Clarifying Temporary Amendment Act of 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–945. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–647, ''Professional Engineers Licensure and Regulation Clarification Amendment Act of 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–946. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–648, ''Active Duty Pay Differential Amendment Act of 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–947. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–649, ''Continuing Care Retirement Community Exemption Amendment Act of 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–948. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–650, ''UDC DREAM Amendment Act of 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–949. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–651, ''Accountancy Practice Amendment Act of 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–950. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–652, ''Pesticide Education and Control Amendment Act of 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–951. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–653, ''Risk-Based Capital Amendment Act of 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–952. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 21–654, ''End Taxation Without Representation Amendment Act of 2016''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–953. A communication from the Acting Chairman, Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's fiscal year 2016 report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–954. A communication from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, ''Planning,

Buying, and Implementing New Information Technology: A Case Study of the D.C. Business Center''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–955. A communication from the Director of the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustments; Annual Adjustments'' (RIN1076–AF35) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2017; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

EC–956. A communication from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''The Department of Justice 2016 Freedom of Information Act Litigation and Compliance Report'', the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for all federal agencies' Freedom of Information Act reports; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–957. A communication from the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Diversion Control, Drug Enforcement Agency, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of 10 Synthetic Cathinones Into Schedule I'' (Docket No. DEA–436) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–958. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report of the Attorney General to Congress Pursuant to the Death in Custody Reporting Act''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–959. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–8186)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–960. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–6427)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–961. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–7261)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–962. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–6430)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–963. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (101); Amdt. No. 3733'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–964. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9050)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–965. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0571)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–966. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0797)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–967. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9111)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–968. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–6664)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–969. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–5468)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–970. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–6426)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–971. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–5040)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–972. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9066)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–973. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9305)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–974. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9191)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–975. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (Embraer) Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9049)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–976. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Textron Aviation Inc. (Type Certificate Previously Held by Cessna Aircraft Company) Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0122)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–977. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9190)) received during adjournment of the Senate

in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–978. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; BAE Systems (Operations) Limited'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9186)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–979. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Alexander Schleicher GmbH and Company Gliders'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–9049)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–980. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; PILATUS AIRCRAFT LTD. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–7003)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–981. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2016–7415)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–982. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Piper Aircraft, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2017–0045)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–983. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (57); Amdt. No. 3731'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–984. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Part 95 Instrument Flight Rules; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 531'' (RIN2120–AA63) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–985. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace, Salem, OR'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2016–6984)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 3, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–986. A communication from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Reel Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; 2016 Recreational Accountability Measures and Closure for Gulf of Mexico Greater Amberjack'' (RIN0648–XE757) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 1, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–987. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2016 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for South Atlantic Vermilion Snapper'' (RIN0648–XE910) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–988. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Exchange of Flatfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XE878) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–989. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2016 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for South Atlantic Greater Amberjack'' (RIN0648–XE896) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–990. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Exchange of Flatfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XE009) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–991. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher/Processors Using Trawl Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XE854) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 1, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–992. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic; 2016 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for the South Atlantic Lesser Amberjack, Almaco Jack, and Banded Rudderfish Complex'' (RIN0648–XE754) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 1, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–993. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2016 Accountability Measure-Based Closures for Commercial and Recreational Species in the U.S. Caribbean Off Puerto Rico'' (RIN0648–XE491) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 1, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–994. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to Safety Standard for Toddler Beds'' (Docket No. CSPC–2017–0012) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–995. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revitalization of the AM Radio Service'' ((MB Docket No. 13–249) (FCC 17–14)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. MCCAIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

Army nomination of Lt. Gen. Herbert R. McMaster, Jr., to be Lieutenant General.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. REED (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 536. A bill to promote transparency in the oversight of cybersecurity risks at publicly traded companies; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. UDALL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 537. A bill to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. RISCH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WICKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. DAINES, Mr. KING, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 538. A bill to clarify research and development for wood products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 539. A bill to designate the area between the intersections of 16th Street, Northwest and Fuller Street, Northwest and 16th Street, Northwest and Euclid Street, Northwest in Washington, District of Columbia, as ''Oswaldo Paya Way''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. REED, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. HELLER, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 540. A bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 541. A bill to amend the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 to provide for a macadamia tree health initiative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 542. A bill to amend title 9, United States Code, with respect to arbitration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 543. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include in each contract into which the Secretary enters for necessary services authorities and mechanism for appropriate oversight, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 544. A bill to amend Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEE, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 545. A bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WICKER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CORNYN, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 546. A bill to reduce temporarily the royalty required to be paid for sodium produced on Federal lands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 547. A bill to prevent mail, telemarketing, and Internet fraud targeting seniors in the United States, to promote efforts to increase public awareness of the enormous impact that mail, telemarketing, and Internet fraud have on seniors, to educate the public, seniors, their families, and their caregivers about how to identify and combat fraudulent activity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. HELLER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 548. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform the low-income housing credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 549. A bill to block implementation of the Executive Order that restricts individuals from certain countries from entering the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BOOKER, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 550. A bill to restore statutory rights to the people of the United States from forced arbitration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 551. A bill to establish responsibility for the International Outfall Interceptor; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REED, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 552. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act and the Electronic Fund Transfer Act to provide justice to victims of fraud; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 553. A bill to provide that chapter 1 of title 9 of the United States Code, relating to the enforcement of arbitration agreements, shall not apply to enrollment agreements made between students and certain institutions of higher education, and to prohibit limitations on the ability of students to pursue claims against certain institutions of higher education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself and Mr. LEE):

S. 554. A bill to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 2002 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 555. A bill for the relief of Shirley Constantino Tan; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 556. A bill for the relief of Joseph Gabra and Sharon Kamel; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 557. A bill for the relief of Jose Alberto Martinez Moreno, Micaela Lopez Martinez, and Adilene Martinez; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 558. A bill for the relief of Esidronio Arreola-Saucedo, Maria Elena Cobian Arreola, Nayely Arreola Carlos, and Cindy Jael Arreola; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 559. A bill for the relief of Alfredo Plascencia Lopez; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 560. A bill for the relief of Jorge Rojas Gutierrez and Oliva Gonzalez; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 561. A bill for the relief of Alicia Aranda De Buendia; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 562. A bill for the relief of Ruben Mkoian, Asmik Karapetian, and Arthur Mkoian; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRUZ, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LEE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. MORAN):

S.J. Res. 34. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission relating to ''Protecting the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services''; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. Res. 82. A resolution congratulating the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Laboratory; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 14

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 14, a bill to provide that Members of Congress may not receive pay after October 1 of any fiscal year in which Congress has not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget and passed the regular appropriations bills.

S. 58

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) were added as cosponsors of S. 58, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

S. 92

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 92, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to allow for the personal importation of safe and affordable drugs from approved pharmacies in Canada.

S. 96

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 96, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure the integrity of voice communications and to prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination among areas of the United States in the delivery of such communications.

S. 104

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 104, a bill to provide for the vacating of certain convictions and expungement of certain arrests of victims of human trafficking.

S. 170

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 170, a bill to provide for nonpreemption of measures by State and local governments to divest from entities that engage in commerce-related or investment-related boycott, divestment, or sanctions activities targeting Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 203

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 203, a bill to reaffirm that the Environmental Protection Agency may not regulate vehicles used solely for competition, and for other purposes.

S. 241

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 241, a bill to prohibit Federal funding of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

S. 252

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 252, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require drug manufacturers to provide drug rebates for drugs dispensed to low-income individuals under the Medicare prescription drug benefit program.

S. 253

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 253, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 260

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 260, a bill to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board.

S. 272

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 272, a bill to enhance the security operations of the Transportation Security Administration and the stability of the transportation security workforce by applying a unified personnel system under title 5, United States Code, to employees of the Transportation Security Administration who are responsible for screening passengers and property, and for other purposes.

S. 301

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 301, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit governmental discrimination against providers of health services that are not involved in abortion.

S. 303

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 303, a bill to discontinue a Federal program that authorizes State and local law enforcement officers to investigate, apprehend, and detain aliens in accordance with a written agreement with the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and to clarify that immigration enforcement is solely a function of the Federal Government.

S. 315

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 315, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Army to place in Arlington National Cemetery a monument honoring the helicopter pilots and crewmembers who were killed while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam era, and for other purposes.

S. 324

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 324, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

S. 333

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 333, a bill to limit donations made pursuant to settlement agreements to which the United States is a party, and for other purposes.

S. 339

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 339, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 370

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 370, a bill to eliminate the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection by repealing title X of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, commonly known as the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010.

S. 394

At the request of Mr. ROUNDS, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 394, a bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to provide that a member of the Armed Forces and the spouse of that member shall have the same rights regarding the receipt of firearms at the location of any duty station of the member.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 407, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 431

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 431, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand the use of telehealth for individuals with stroke.

S. 438

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 438, a bill to encourage effective, voluntary investments to recruit, employ, and retain men and women who have served in the United States military with annual Federal awards to employers recognizing such efforts, and for other purposes.

S. 482

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 482, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain amounts paid for physical activity, fitness, and exercise as amounts paid for medical care.

S. 487

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 487, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness programs.

S. 489

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 489, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to participant votes on the suspension of benefits under multiemployer plans in critical and declining status.

S. 505

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 505, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an energy equivalent of a gallon of diesel in the case of liquefied natural gas for purposes of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund financing rate.

S. 512

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 512, a bill to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy.

S. 518

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 518, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for technical assistance for small treatment works.

S.J. RES. 1

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 1, a joint resolution approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield.

S.J. RES. 27

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 27, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to ''Clarification of Employer's Continuing Obligation to Make and Maintain an Accurate Record of Each Recordable Injury and Illness''.

S.J. RES. 28

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 28, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency relating to accidental release prevention requirements of risk management programs under the Clean Air Act.

S. RES. 23

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 23, a resolution establishing the Select Committee on Cybersecurity.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 536. A bill to promote transparency in the oversight of cybersecurity risks at publicly traded companies; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing the Cybersecurity Disclosure Act of 2017 along with two members of the Select Committee on Intelligence, Senator Collins, and the ranking member, Senator Warner. In response to data breaches of various companies that exposed the personal information of millions of customers, our legislation asks each publicly traded company to include—in Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC, disclosures to investors—information on whether any member of the board of directors is a cybersecurity expert, and if why having this expertise on the board of directors is not necessary because of other cyber security steps taken by the publicly traded company. To be clear, the legislation does not require companies to take any actions other than to provide this disclosure to its investors.

Many investors may be surprised to learn that board directors who participated in the National Association of Corporate Directors, NACD, roundtable discussions on cyber security late in 2013 admitted that ''the lack of adequate knowledge of information technology risk has made it challenging for them to 'effectively oversee management's cybersecurity activities.''' More recently, in Deloitte's 10th Global Risk Management Survey of Financial Services Institutions, published this month, 42 percent of respondents considered their institution to be less effective in managing cybersecurity. And according to the 2016–2017 NACD Public Company Governance Survey, ''fifty-nine percent of respondents reported that they find it challenging to oversee cyber risk, and only 19 percent of respondents said that their boards possess a high level of knowledge about cybersecurity.'' Indeed, Yahoo in its most recent annual report, which was filed with the SEC last week, disclosed that ''the Independent Committee found that failures in communication, management, inquiry and internal reporting contributed to the lack of proper comprehension and handling of the 2014 Security Incident. The Independent Committee also found that the Audit and Finance Committee and the full board were not adequately informed of the full severity, risks, and potential impacts of the 2014 Security Incident and related matters.'' The 2014 Security Incident here refers to the fact that ''a copy of certain user account information for approximately 500 million user accounts was stolen from Yahoo's network in late 2014.'' This is particularly troubling given that data breaches are on the rise. Indeed, 2016 was a recordbreaking year for data breaches, which increased 40 percent from the prior year to 1,093 breaches according to the Identity Theft Resource Center.

Investors and customers deserve a clear understanding of whether publicly traded companies are prioritizing cyber security and have the capacity to protect investors and customers from cyber-related attacks. Our legislation aims to provide a better understanding of these issues through improved SEC disclosure.

While this legislation is a matter for consideration by the Banking Committee, of which I am a member, this bill is also informed by my service on the Armed Services Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence. It is through this Banking-Armed Services-Intelligence perspective that I see that our economic security is indeed a matter of our national security, and this is particularly the case as our economy becomes increasingly reliant on technology and the Internet.

For example, when he was Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, appeared before the Armed Services Committee in 2015 and testified that ''cyber threats to the U.S. national and economic security are increasing in frequency, scale, sophistication and severity of impact.'' He further said that ''[b]ecause of our heavy dependence on the Internet, nearly all information communication technologies and I.T. networks and systems will be perpetually at risk.''

Indeed, retired Army GEN Keith Alexander, who is the former commander of the United States Cyber Command and former Director of the National Security Agency, appeared before the Armed Services Committee this month and stated that ''while the primary responsibility of government is to defend the nation, the private sector also shares responsibility in creating the partnership necessary to make the defense of our nation possible. Neither the government nor the private sector can capably protect their systems and networks without extensive and close cooperation.''

With mounting cyber threats and concerns over the capabilities of corporate directors, we all need to be more proactive in ensuring our Nation's cyber security before there are additional serious breaches. This legislation seeks to take one step toward that

goal by encouraging publicly traded companies to be more transparent to their investors and customers on whether and how their boards of directors are prioritizing cyber security.

I thank Harvard Law School professor John Coates, MIT professor Simon Johnson, Columbia Law School professor John Coffee, and the Consumer Federation of America for their support, and I urge my colleagues to join Senator Collins, Senator Warner, and me in supporting this legislation.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BOOKER, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 550. A bill to restore statutory rights to the people of the United States from forced arbitration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, I have reintroduced legislation to protect Americans from being stripped of their legal rights by little known clauses that are now hidden in an alarming number of contracts. When we enter into agreements to obtain cell phone service, rent an apartment, or accept a new job, most are not made aware of the forced arbitration clauses that are tucked away in the legal fine print. But these dangerous provision force us to abandon our constitutional right to protect ourselves in court and instead send hard-working Americans to face wealthy corporations behind closed doors in private arbitration. This must change.

When Congress passed the Federal Arbitration Act in 1925, it was intended to help businesses resolve legal disputes with each other. But over the past two decades, private arbitration has been abused by large companies to push Americans out of court. In doing so, these companies have effectively opted out of critical labor, consumer, and civil rights laws that give Americans the ability to assert their claims before our independent judiciary.

Forced arbitration clauses now appear in nearly every contract we sign. Unfortunately, examples of the injustice caused by these clauses are equally ubiquitous and can be found all across the country. They affect consumers, workers, seniors, veterans, and families in Vermont and every other State, and the cases are heart-wrenching.

Just last week, the Washington Post reported that hundreds of current and former employees of Sterling Jewelers—a company that earns $6 billion in annual revenue—have for years alleged that the company is engaged in pervasive gender discrimination and has fostered a culture that condones sexual harassment. The stories now being reported are shocking and date back to the early 1990s. Yet, despite the fact that women at the company have been alleging misconduct for decades, no one knew about it. That is because their claims were hidden behind closed doors because of private arbitration. To this day, we still do not know the full details.

The press has helped to bring attention to other instances of forced arbitration in recent years. In 2015, the Los Angeles Times revealed that Wells Fargo used arbitration clauses to deny customers whose names were used to open fraudulent accounts an opportunity to seek justice in court. In fact, Wells Fargo asked a Federal court in Utah to move a number of sham account allegations to arbitration. The New York Times dedicated a three-part investigative series to highlighting the impact on consumers and workers of forced arbitration clauses. And becoming the story herself, television journalist Gretchen Carlson was barred from speaking publicly about her allegations of sexual harassment against former FOX News chairman Roger Ailes.

I have long raised concerns about the practice of forced arbitration, and as chairman led hearings of the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2007, 2008, 2011, and 2013. This should not be a partisan issue. Both Republican and Democratic attorneys general have repeatedly spoken out against the Federal Arbitration Act's intrusion on State sovereignty and a State's compelling interest in protecting the health and welfare of its citizens. In Vermont, lawmakers enacted commonsense legislation to limit the abuse of forced arbitration clauses and raise consumer awareness, but but this law was invalidated because it conflicted with Federal law. Companies have effectively created a ''get out of jail free'' card that guts our laws and shields bad actors from any type of public accountability. This is an unconscionable situation, and Congress must act.

The Restoring Statutory Rights Act that I am reintroducing today/will protect Americans' right to seek justice in our courts. It will ensure that our Federal laws will actually be effective by ensuring that Americans cannot be stripped of their ability to enforce their rights before our independent court system. This bill also ensures that when States act to address forced arbitration, as my home State of Vermont has, they are not preempted by an overbroad reading of our Federal arbitration laws.

This effort is supported by the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, the National Employment Lawyers' Association, and consumer groups such as National Association of Consumer Advocates, Consumers Union, Public Citizen, the National Consumer Law Center, and Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety. For years, these groups and many others have worked tirelessly to highlight the injustice of forced arbitration and the full scope of the number of people it affects.

All Senators should care about ensuring that corporations cannot unilaterally circumvent the statutes that this body writes, debates, and enacts into law. Senators should also care about the ability of the States to protect consumers from unconscionable contracts. I urge Members to support this bill.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 553. A bill to provide that chapter 1 of title 9 of the United States Code, relating to the enforcement of arbitration agreements, shall not apply to enrollment agreements made between students and certain institutions of higher education, and to prohibit limitations on the ability of students to pursue claims against certain institutions of higher education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 553

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 ''Court Legal Access and Student Support (CLASS) Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. INAPPLICABILITY OF CHAPTER 1 OF TITLE 9, UNITED STATES CODE, TO ENROLLMENT AGREEMENTS MADE BETWEEN STUDENTS AND CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 9 of the United States Code (relating to the enforcement of arbitration agreements) shall not apply to an enrollment agreement made between a student and an institution of higher education.

(b) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''institution of higher education'' has the meaning given such term in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON LIMITATIONS ON ABILITY OF STUDENTS TO PURSUE CLAIMS AGAINST CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Section 487(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(30) The institution will not require any student to agree to, and will not enforce, any limitation or restriction (including a limitation or restriction on any available choice of applicable law, a jury trial, or venue) on the ability of a student to pursue a claim, individually or with others, against an institution in court.''.

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 555. A bill for the relief of Shirley Constantino Tan; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing a bill for the private relief of Shirley Constantino Tan. Ms. Tan is a Filipina national living in Pacifica, CA. She is the proud

mother of 20-year-old U.S. citizen twin boys, Joriene and Jashley, and the spouse of Jay Mercado, a naturalized U.S. citizen.

I believe Ms. Tan merits Congress's special consideration for this extraordinary form of relief because her removal from the United States would cause undue hardship for her and her family. She faces deportation to the Philippines, which would separate her from her family and jeopardize her safety.

Ms. Tan experienced horrific violence in the Philippines before she left to come to the United States. When she was only 14 years old, her cousin murdered her mother and her sister and shot Shirley in the head. While the cousin who committed the murders was eventually prosecuted, he received a short jail sentence. Fearing for her safety, Ms. Tan fled the Philippines just before her cousin was due to be released from jail. She entered the United States legally on a visitor's visa in 1989.

Ms. Tan's current deportation order is the result of negligent counsel. She applied for asylum in 1995. While her case appeal was pending at the Board of Immigration Appeals, her attorney failed to submit a brief to support her case. As a result, the case was dismissed, and the Board of Immigration Appeals granted Shirley voluntary departure from the United States.

Ms. Tan never received notice that the Board of Immigration Appeals granted her voluntary departure. Her attorney moved offices, did not receive the order, and ultimately never informed her of the order. As a result, Ms. Tan did not depart the United States and the grant of voluntary departure automatically led to a removal order. She learned about the deportation order for the first time on January 28, 2009, when Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents took her into immigration custody.

Because of her attorney's negligent actions, Ms. Tan was denied the opportunity to present her case in immigration proceedings. She later filed a complaint with the State Bar of California against her former attorney. She is not the first person to file such a complaint against this attorney.

On February 4, 2015, Ms. Tan's spouse, Jay, a U.S. citizen, filed an approved spousal petition on her behalf. On August 20, 2015, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services denied her application due to the fact that she still had a final order of removal. Ms. Tan must go back to the immigration court and ask for the court to terminate her case and then reapply for her green card. Ms. Tan is now again facing the threat of deportation while she seeks to close her case before an immigration court.

In addition to the hardship that Ms. Tan would endure if she is deported, her deportation would cause serious hardship to her two U.S. citizen children, Joriene and Jashley.

Joriene is a junior at Stanford University and is premed, majoring in human biology. In addition to his studies, Joriene is involved in Stanford's Pilipino-American Student Union.

Jashley is a junior at Chapman University, majoring in business administration. Ms. Tan no longer runs her in-home daycare and is a homemaker.

If Ms. Tan were forced to leave the United States, her family has expressed that they would go with her to the Philippines or try to find a third country where the entire family could relocate. This would mean that Joriene and Jashley would have to leave behind their education and the only home they know in the United States.

I do not believe it is in our Nation's best interest to force this family, with two U.S. citizen children, to make the choice between being separated and relocating to a country where they may face safety concerns or other serious hardships.

Ms. Tan and her family are involved in their community in Pacifica and own their own home. The family attends Good Shepherd Catholic Church, volunteering at the church and the Mother Teresa of Calcutta's Daughters of Charity. Ms. Tan has the support of dozens of members of her community who have shared with me the family's spirit of commitment to their community.

Enactment of the legislation I am introducing on behalf of Ms. Tan today will enable this entire family to continue their lives in California and make positive contributions to their community.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to support this private bill.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 556. A bill for the relief of Joseph Gabra and Sharon Kamel; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing private relief legislation on behalf of Joseph Gabra and Sharon Kamel, a couple living with their four U.S. citizen children in Camarillo, CA.

Joseph and Sharon are nationals of Egypt who fled their home country over 19 years ago after being targeted for their religious membership in the Christian Coptic Church in Egypt. They became involved with this church during the 1990s, Joseph as an accountant and project coordinator helping to build community facilities and Sharon as the church's training director in human resources.

Unfortunately, Joseph and Sharon were also subjected to threats and abuse. Joseph was jailed repeatedly because of his involvement with the church. Sharon's family members were violently targeted, including her cousin who was murdered and her brother whose business was firebombed. When Sharon became pregnant with her first child, she was threatened by a member of a different religious organization for raising her child in a non-Muslim faith.

Joseph and Sharon came to the United States legally on visitor visas in November 1998. Due to their fears of persecution in Egypt based on their religious beliefs, they filed for asylum in the United States in May 1999.

However, Joseph, who has a speech impediment, had difficulty communicating why he was afraid to return to Egypt, and 1 year later their asylum application was denied. Considering that Sharon's brother, who also applied for asylum for similar reasons, was granted asylum in the United States, Joseph and Sharon appealed the denial of their asylum applications, to no avail.

While Sharon's brother, who is now a U.S. citizen, has filed a family-based immigrant petition on Sharon's behalf, it will be at least 4 years until she will even be eligible for a visa number due to visa backlogs.

If Sharon and Joseph are deported before then, they will not only be separated from their family but will be forced to return to a country where persecution of Coptic Christians continues.

Due to their fear of returning to Egypt, Joseph and Sharon have therefore tried to build a life for themselves here in the United States, working hard while building their beautiful family. With the protection of past private bills I filed on their behalf, Joseph was able to get his certified public accountant license and opened his own accounting firm, where Sharon works by his side.

Joseph and Sharon make sure that their four U.S. citizen children—Jessica, age 18, Rebecca, age 17, Rafael, age 16, and Veronica, age 11—all attend school in California and maintain good grades.

Joseph and Sharon carry strong support from friends, members of their local church, and other Californians who attest to their good character and community contributions.

I am concerned that the entire family would face serious and unwarranted hardships if Joseph and Sharon were forced to return to Egypt. For Jessica, Rebecca, Rafael, and Veronica, the only home they know is in the United States. Separation of this family would be devastating and the alternative—relocating the family to Egypt—could be dire, as it is quite possible that these four American children would face discrimination or worse on account of their religion, as was the experience of many of their family members.

Joseph and Sharon have made a compelling plea to remain in the United States. These parents emphasize their commitment to supporting their children and creating a healthy and productive place for them to grow up in California. I believe this family deserves that opportunity.

I respectfully ask my colleagues to support this private relief bill on behalf of Joseph Gabra and Sharon Kamel.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 557. A bill for the relief of Jose Alberto Martinez Moreno, Micaela

Lopez Martinez, and Adilene Martinez; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing private immigration relief legislation to provide lawful permanent resident status to Jose Alberto Martinez Moreno, Micaela Lopez Martinez, and their daughter, Adilene Martinez. This family is originally from Mexico but has been living in California for over 20 years. I believe they merit Congress's special consideration for this extraordinary form of relief.

When Jose came to the United States from Mexico, he began working as a busboy in restaurants in San Francisco, CA. In 1990, he started working as a cook at Palio D'Asti, an award-winning Italian restaurant in San Francisco.

Jose worked his way through the ranks, eventuall becoming Palio's sous chef. His colleagues describe him as a reliable and cool-headed coworker and as ''an exemplary employee'' who not only is ''good at his job but is also a great boss to his subordinates.''

He and his wife Micaela call San Francisco home. Micaela is a homemaker and part-time housekeeper. They have three daughters, two of whom are U.S. citizens. Their oldest daughter, Adilene, age 28, is undocumented. She currently works fulltime at a cinema and hopes to continue pursuing her studies in the future.

The Martinez's second daughter, Jazmin, age 24, is a U.S. citizen. She graduated from Leadership High School and is now studying at California State University, San Francisco. Jazmin has been diagnosed with asthma, which requires constant treatment. According to her doctor, if Jazmin were to return to Mexico with her family, the high altitude and air pollution in Mexico City could be fatal to her. The Martinez's other U.S. citizen daughter, Karla, is 19 years old and attends San Francisco City College.

The Martinez family attempted to legalize their status through several channels.

In 2001, Jose's sister, who has legal status, petitioned for Jose to get a green card. However, the current green card backlog for siblings from Mexico is very long, and it will be many years before Jose will be eligible to legalize his status though his sister.

In 2002, the Martinez family applied for political asylum. Their application was denied. An immigration judge denied their subsequent application for cancellation of removal.

Finally, Daniel Scherotter, the executive chef and owner of Palio D'Asti, petitioned for an employment-based green card for Jose based upon his unique skills as a chef. Jose's petition was approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. However, before he will be eligible for a green card, he must apply for a hardship waiver, which cannot be guaranteed.

The Martinez family has become an integral part of their community in California. They are active in their faith community. They volunteer with community-based organizations and are, in turn, supported by their community. When I first introduced this bill, I received dozens of letters of support from their fellow parishioners, teachers, and members of their community.

The Martinez family truly exemplifies the American dream. Jose worked his way through the restaurant industry to become a chef and an indispensable employee at a renowned restaurant. With great dedication, Micaela has worked hard to raise three daughters who are advancing their education and look forward to continuing the pursuit of their goals.

I believe the Martinez family's continued presence in the United States would allow them to continue making significant contributions to their community in California.

I ask my colleagues to support this private bill.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 558. A bill for the relief of Esidronio Arreola-Saucedo, Maria Elena Cobian Arreola, Nayely Arreola Carlos, and Cindy Jael Arreola; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I offer private immigration relief legislation to provide lawful permanent resident status to Esidronio Arreola-Saucedo, Maria Elena Cobian Arreola, Nayely Arreola Carlos, and Cindy Jael Arreola. The Arreolas are Mexican nationals living in the Fresno area of California.

Esidronio and Maria Elena have lived in the United States for over 20 years. Two of their five children—Nayely, age 30, and Cindy, age 28—also stand to benefit from this legislation. The other three Arreola children—Robert, age 25, Daniel, age 22, and Saray, age 20—are U.S. citizens. The story of the Arreola family is compelling, and I believe they merit Congress's special consideration for such an extraordinary form of relief as a private bill.

The Arreolas are facing deportation in part because of grievous errors committed by their previous counsel, who has since been disbarred. In fact, the attorney's conduct was so egregious that it compelled an immigration judge to write to the Executive Office of Immigration Review seeking the attorney's disbarment for his actions in his clients' immigration cases.

Esidronio came to the United States in 1986 and was an agricultural migrant worker in the fields of California for several years. As a migrant worker at that time, he would have been eligible for permanent residence through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers, SWA, Program, had he known about it.

Maria Elena was living in the United States at the time she became pregnant with her daughter Cindy. She returned to Mexico to give birth because she wanted to avoid any immigration issues.

Because of the length of time that the Arreolas were in the United States, it is likely that they would have qualified for suspension of deportation, which would have allowed them to remain in the United States legally. However, the poor legal representation they received foreclosed this opportunity.

One of the most compelling reasons for my introduction of this private bill is the devastating impact the deportation of Esidronio and Maria Elena would have on their children—three of whom are American citizens—and the other two who have lived in the United States since they were toddlers. America is the only country the Arreola children have ever known.

Nayely, the oldest, was the first in her family to graduate from high school and the first to graduate college. She recently received her Masters in Business Administration from Fresno Pacific University, a regionally ranked university, and now works in the admissions office. Nayely is married and has a young son named Elijah Ace Carlos.

At a young age, Nayely demonstrated a strong commitment to the ideals of citizenship in her adopted country. She worked hard to achieve her full potential both through her academic endeavors and community service. As the Associate Dean of Enrollment Services at Fresno Pacific University states in a letter of support, ''[T]he leaders of Fresno Pacific University saw in Nayely, a young person who will become exemplary of all that is good in the American dream.''

In high school, Nayely was a member of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) college preparatory program in which students commit to determining their own futures through attaining a college degree. Nayely was also President of the Key Club, a community service organization. Perhaps the greatest hardship to Nayely's U.S. citizen husband and child, if she were forced to return to Mexico, would be her lost opportunity to realize her dreams and contribute further to her community and to this country.

Nayely's sister, Cindy, is also married and has a 7-year-old daughter and a 5-year-old son. Neither Nayely nor Cindy is eligible to automatically adjust their status based on their marriages because of their initial unlawful entry.

The Arreolas also have other family who are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents of this country. Maria Elena has three brothers who are American citizens, and Esidronio has a sister who is an American citizen. They have no immediate family in Mexico.

According to immigration authorities, this family has never had any problems with law enforcement. I am told that they have filed their taxes every year from 1990 to the present. They have always worked hard to support themselves.

As I mentioned, Esidronio was previously employed as a farm worker but now has his own business in California repairing electronics. His business has been successful enough to enable him to purchase a home for his family. He and his wife are active in their church community and in their children's education.

It is clear to me that this family has embraced the American dream. Enactment of the legislation I have reintroduced today will enable the Arreolas to continue to make significant contributions to their community as well as the United States.

I ask my colleagues to support this private bill.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 559. A bill for the relief of Alfredo Plascencia Lopez; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to offer legislation to provide lawful permanent residence status to Alfredo Plascencia Lopez, a Mexican national who lives in the San Bruno area of California.

I offer legislation on his behalf because I believe that, without it, this hard-working man, wife who is a lawful permanent resident, and children would face extreme hardship. His children would either face separation from their father or be forced to leave the only country they know and give up the education they are pursuing in the United States.

Alfredo and his wife Maria have been in the United States for over 20 years. They worked for years to adjust their status through appropriate legal channels, but poor legal representation ruined their opportunities.

The Plascencias' lawyer refused to return their calls or otherwise communicate with them in any way. He also failed to forward crucial immigration documents. Because of the poor representation they received, Alfredo only became aware that they had been ordered to leave the United States 15 days prior to his scheduled deportation.

Alfredo was shocked to learn of his attorney's malfeasance, but he acted quickly to secure legitimate counsel and filed the appropriate paperwork to delay his deportation and determine if any other legal action could be taken.

Together, Alfredo and Maria have used their professional successes, with the assistance of private bills, to realize many of the goals dreamed of by all Americans. They have worked hard and saved up to buy their home.

They have good health care benefits, and they each have begun saving for retirement. They are sending their children Christina, Erika, and Danny, to college and plan to send the rest of their children to college, as well.

Their oldest child, Christina, is 26 years old, and takes classes at Heald College to become a paralegal. Erika, age 22, graduated from high school and is currently taking classes at Skyline College. Her teachers have praised her abilities and have referred to her as a ''bright spot'' in the classroom. Danny, age 20, currently attends the University of California and volunteers at his local homeless shelter in the soup kitchen. Daisy, age 15, and Juan Pablo, age 10, are in school and plan on attending college.

Allowing Alfredo to remain in the United States is necessary to enable his family to continue thriving in the United States. His children are dedicated to pursuing their education and being productive members of their community.

I do not believe that Alfredo should be separated from his family. I am reintroducing this legislation to protect the best interest of Alfredo's U.S. citizen children and his wife, who is a lawful permanent resident. I believe that Alfredo will continue to make positive contributions to his community in California and this country. I respectfully ask my colleagues to support this bill.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 560. A bill for the relief of Jorge Rojas Gutierrez and Oliva Gonzalez; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing a private relief bill on behalf of Jorge Rojas Gutierrez and his wife, Oliva Gonzalez. The Rojas family, originally from Mexico, is living in the San Jose area of California.

The story of the Rojas family is compelling, and I believe they merit Congress's special consideration for such an extraordinary form of relief as a private bill.

Jorge and Oliva originally came to the United States in 1990 when their son Jorge Rojas, Jr., was just 2 years old. In 1995, they left the country to attend a funeral and then reentered the United States on visitors' visas.

The family has grown to include three U.S. citizen children: Alexis, now 24 years old, Tanya, 22 years old, and Matias, now 7 years old. Jorge and Oliva are also the grandparents of Meena Rojas.

The Rojas family first attempted to legalize their status in the United States when an unscrupulous immigration consultant, who was not an attorney, advised them to apply for asylum. Unfortunately, without proper legal guidance, the family did not realize at the time that they lacked a valid basis for asylum. Their asylum claim was denied in 2008, leaving the Rojas family with no further options to legalize their status.

Since their arrival in the United States more than 20 years ago, the Rojas family has demonstrated a robust work ethic and a strong commitment to their community in California. They have paid their taxes and worked hard to contribute to this country.

Jorge is a hard-working individual who has been employed by BrightView Landscaping Services, formerly known as Valley Crest Landscape Maintenance, in San Jose, CA, for the past 20 years. Currently, he works on commercial landscaping projects. Jorge is well-respected by his supervisor and his peers.

In addition to supporting his family, Jorge has volunteered his time to provide modern green landscaping and building projects at his children's school in California. He is active in his neighborhood association, through which he worked with his neighbors to open a library and community center in their community.

Oliva, in addition to raising her three children, has also been very active in the local community. She volunteers with the People Acting in Community Together, PACT, organization, where she works to prevent crime, gangs, and drug dealing in San Jose neighborhoods and schools.

Jorge Rojas, Jr., who entered the United States as an infant with his parents, is now the father of 6-year-old Meena. He is 28 years old and working at a job that allows him to support his daughter. Jorge graduated from Del Mar High School in 2007. He has obtained temporary protection from deportation through the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, Program.

Alexis, age 24, graduated from West Valley College in Saratoga, CA, and is interested in continuing his linguistics studies at San Jose State University. Tanya, age 22, is now in her second semester at San Jose State University. Their teachers have described them as ''fantastic, wonderful and gifted'' students.

Perhaps one of the most compelling reasons for permitting the Rojas family to remain in the United States is the impact that their deportation would have on their four children. Three of the Rojas children—Alexis, Tanya, and Matias—American citizens. Additionally, Jorge Rojas, Jr., has lived in the United States since he was a toddler. America is the only country these children have called home. It seems so clear to me that this family has embraced the American dream, and their continued presence in our country would do so much to promote the values we hold dear,

When I first introduced this bill, I received dozens of letters from the community in Northern California in support of this family. Enactment of the legislation I have reintroduced today will keep this great family together and enable each of them to continue making significant contributions to their community as well as the United States.

I ask my colleagues to support this private bill.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 561. A bill for the relief of Alicia Aranda De Buendia; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I am reintroducing a private relief bill

on behalf of Alicia Buendia, a woman who has lived in the Fresno area of California for more than 20 years. I believe her situation merits Congress's special consideration.

She is married to Jose Buendia, and together they have raised two outstanding children, Ana Laura, age 28, and Alex, age 26, a U.S. citizen. Both children have excelled in school. Ana Laura graduated from University of California, Irvine, and Alex is currently attending the University of California, Merced.

I previously introduced bills for Alicia, her husband, and Ana Laura. Thankfully, Jose has successfully secured lawful permanent residency for himself through cancellation of removal. This followed 7 unfortunate years of delay in the immigration courts to determine his eligibility under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 for permanent residence. Ana Laura has obtained temporary protection from deportation through the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, Program.

However, Alicia, who is eligible to adjust status, is still awaiting a determination on a family-based immigration petition filed by her U.S. citizen son. Additionally, she would be required to file a waiver application, which could result in separation from her family

Alicia warrants private relief and a chance to start fresh in America. She goes to work season after season in California's labor-intensive agriculture industry in Reedley, CA, where she currently works for a fruit packing company.

In the more than 20 years of living in California, Alicia has dedicated herself to her family and community. She and Jose have worked hard to honestly feed their family and have raised two exceptional children who have both pursued and excelled in higher education.

Alicia has a strong connection to her local community, serving as an active member of her church. She and Jose pay their taxes every year, have successfully paid off their mortgage, and remain free of debt. They have shown that they are responsible, maintaining health insurance, savings accounts, and retirement accounts. Without this private bill, Alicia would be separated from her lawful permanent resident husband, two children who rely on her for love, support, and guidance.

I ask my colleagues to support this private bill.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 562. A bill for the relief of Ruben Mkoian, Asmik Karapetian, and Arthur Mkoian; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I am reintroducing private relief legislation in the 115th Congress on behalf of Ruben Mkoian, Asmik Karapetian, and their son, Arthur Mkoian. The Mkoian family has been living in Fresno, CA, for over 20 years. I continue to believe this family deserves Congress's special consideration for such an extraordinary form of relief as a private bill.

The Mkoian family is originally from Armenia. They decided to leave Armenia for the United States in the early 1990s, following several incidents in which the family experienced harassment, vandalism and threats to their well-being.

In Armenia, Ruben worked as a police sergeant on vehicle licensing. At one point, he was offered a bribe to register stolen vehicles, which he refused and reported to his superior, the police chief. He later learned that a coworker had registered the vehicles at the request of the same chief.

After Ruben reported the bribe offer to illegally register vehicles and said he would call the police, his family store was vandalized and he received threatening phone calls telling him to keep quiet. A bottle of gasoline was thrown into his family's residence, burning it to the ground. In April 1992, several men entered the family store and assaulted Ruben, hospitalizing him for 22 days.

Ruben, Asmik, and their son Arthur, who was 3 years old at the time, left Armenia and entered the United States on visitor visas. They applied for political asylum that same year on the grounds that they would be subject to physical attacks if returned to Armenia. It took 16 years for their case to be finalized, with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals denying their asylum case in January 2008.

At this time, Ruben, Asmik, and Arthur have exhausted every option to obtain immigration relief in the United States. While Ruben and Asmik's other son, Arsen, is a U.S. citizen, he is too young to file a green card petition on their behalf.

It would be a terrible shame to remove this family from the United States and to separate them from Arsen, who is 20 years old and a U.S. citizen. The Mkoians have worked hard to build a place for their family in California and are an integral part of their community.

The family attends St. Paul Armenian Apostolic Church in Fresno. They do charity work to send medical equipment to Armenia.

Ruben works as a driver for Uber. He previously worked as a manager at a car wash in Fresno and as a truck-driver for a California trucking company that described him as ''trustworthy,'' ''knowledgeable,'' and an asset to the company. Asmik has worked as a medical assistant the past 6 years at the Fresno Shields Medical Center.

Arthur has proven to be a hard-working, smart young man who applies himself. He was recognized nationally for his scholastic achievement, having maintained a 4.0 grade point average in high school and serving as his class valedictorian. After graduating on the Dean's Merit List from the University of California, Davis with a major in Chemistry, he is now a full-time analyst at a water testing company. He also teaches Armenian School on Saturdays at the church.

Arthur's brother, Arsen currently attends Fresno State University, is majoring in Computer Science, and maintains a 3.8 GPA. These two young men have already accomplished so much and clearly aspire to do great things here in the United States.

Reflecting their contributions to their community, Representatives George Radanovich and JIM COSTA strongly supported this family's ability to remain in the United States. When I first introduced a private bill for the Mkoian family, I received more than 200 letters of support and dozens of calls of support from friends and community members, attesting to the positive impact that this family has had in Fresno, California.

I believe that this case warrants our compassion. I respectfully ask my colleagues to support this private legislation on behalf of the Mkoian family.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 82—CONGRATULATING THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY APPLIED PHYSICS LABORATORY ON THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE LABORATORY

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 82

Whereas, on March 10, 2017, the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (in this preamble referred to as ''APL''), located in Laurel, Maryland, celebrates the 75th anniversary of the founding of APL on March 10, 1942;

Whereas, less than 4 months after the attack on the United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, APL was established to perfect and help field the radio proximity fuze, one of the most closely guarded wartime secrets of the United States;

Whereas historians have ranked the development of the radio proximity fuze as one of the 3 most important technological developments of World War II, along with the development of radar and the atomic bomb;

Whereas, during and after World War II, APL developed the first generation of Navy surface-to-air missiles and associated propulsion, guidance, control, and targeting technologies;

Whereas APL developed the initial ''phased array'' radar system, called AMFAR, for the Navy that provided the scanning, tracking, and targeting necessary to defend the ships of the United States against simultaneous aircraft and missile raids;

Whereas APL created the first satellite-based global navigation system, called Transit, the forerunner of modern GPS, to serve the ballistic missile submarine force of the United States and provide essential capabilities to the Navy from 1964 until the 1990s;

Whereas APL developed prototypes, experiments, ocean physics research, and engineering models that unlocked the potential of towed sonar arrays, groundbreaking developments that revolutionized anti-submarine

warfare and guided stealth designs for multiple generations of submarines of the United States;

Whereas APL led development of the Navy's Cooperative Engagement Capability that revolutionized air defenses by enabling ships to engage aircraft and missiles not seen by the radars of the ships by using composite radar tracks created from the radars of ships within the battle group;

Whereas APL developed a system called SATRACK to ensure the accuracy of the Trident II submarine-launched ballistic missiles and confidently estimate missile accuracy anywhere in the world;

Whereas APL proposed, developed, built, and operated a number of the most innovative low-cost planetary science missions of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, including—

(1) the Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous (commonly known as ''NEAR'') mission in 2001, the first mission to orbit an asteroid;

(2) the MESSENGER Mercury orbiter, launched in 2004; and

(3) New Horizons, which launched in 2006 and completed a historic flyby of Pluto in 2015;

Whereas APL has been responsible for hundreds of significant contributions to the most critical challenges faced by the United States with respect to national security and space exploration; and

Whereas the sustained commitment by APL to the United States and the Federal Government sponsors of APL allowed APL—

(1) to continuously provide significant contributions to critical challenges with respect to systems engineering and integration, technology research and development, and analysis; and

(2) to serve as the most comprehensive University Affiliated Research Center in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Laboratory;

(2) recognizes the scientific, engineering, and analytical expertise that the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory has applied to solve many of the most critical challenges faced by the United States in the areas of national security and space exploration; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the director of the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I have 3 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 7, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 from 2:30 p.m., room SH–219 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold a closed hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 from 2:20 p.m.–2:30 p.m., in room SH–219 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold a closed busines meeting.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to the following individuals with the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Frances Brie Van Cleve, a Democratic fellow, through December 31, 2017; Stephanie Teich-McGoldrick, a Democratic fellow, through December 31, 2017; Patricio Portillo, a Democratic fellow, through December 31, 2017; and Devinn Lambert, a Democratic detailee, through December 31, 2017.

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

RAISING AWARENESS OF MODERN SLAVERY

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 68.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 68) raising awareness of modern slavery.

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

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 68) was agreed to.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 27, 2017, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

CONGRATULATING THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY APPLIED PHYSICS LABORATORY ON THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE LABORATORY

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 82, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 82) congratulating the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Laboratory.

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

Mr. LEE. 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. 82) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2017

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of H.J. Res. 58.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:16 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 8, 2017, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

R. ALEXANDER ACOSTA, OF FLORIDA, TO BE SECRETARY OF LABOR.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

AJIT VARADARAJ PAI, OF KANSAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS FROM JULY 1, 2016. (REAPPOINTMENT)

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, on March 7 through March 10, 2017, circumstances beyond my control necessitated my absence from the House and I, therefore, am requesting a leave of absence.

RECOGNIZING DONNA FIALA IN HONOR OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women's History Month, I rise today to honor Donna Fiala. Her service as Collier County Commissioner has had major impact in Southwest Florida.

Upon moving to Collier County, Ms. Fiala got involved in her community right away. She joined the Naples Junior Woman's Club, the Marco Island Kiwanis Club, the Marco Island Chamber of Commerce, the Naples Press Club, and the Marco Island Historical Society. She now holds leadership positions in many of these organizations, and several others.

Ms. Fiala decided to run for the office of President of the East Naples Civic Association, where she worked to improve her community by adding picnic benches, a playground, a ball field, and outdoor lighting. Her experiences as President influenced her decision to run for Collier County Commissioner.

As Commissioner, Ms. Fiala has represented Collier County and the State of Florida for issues pertaining to the environment and safety in discussions with the National Association of Counties, and has served as chair of the Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged, which works to increase access to transportation for those who are unable to drive.

In May of 2015, the Donna Fiala Community Center at Eagle Lakes Community Park opened in East Naples. This community center serves as a safe place for children and families to gather for events and various activities. Commissioner Fiala's commitment to helping children and adults live healthy lives has continued. She is currently working to expand the facilities at the park to include a swimming pool complex. This facility reflects her longtime interests in healthy living and improving the appearance of her community.

Commissioner Fiala's work has improved the lives of many in Collier County. The depth and breadth of her service is nothing short of remarkable. Throughout my time in Congress representing Collier County, I've always found Commissioner Fiala to be a dedicated partner as we've worked for the betterment of the Southwest Florida community. I am lucky to be able to collaborate with such a hard working woman who cares so deeply about her community.

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to know Commissioner Fiala and I greatly admire her service to Collier County. Donna is an exemplary example of a private citizen who has chosen to use her many talents in service of those around her. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

RECOGNIZING THE HONOR FLIGHT ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2016

HON. KEN BUCK

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, in honor of America's heroic veterans, the Honor Flight Network conducts two annual Honor Flight ceremonies to Washington, D.C. to give our nation's heroes a day to visit and reflect at their war memorials. On September 11th of last year, Honor Flight Northern Colorado held its 17th Honor Flight that gave many of our courageous veterans this extraordinary opportunity. I am pleased to recognize the Honor Flight on September 11, 2016, honoring World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans of Northern Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, those who participated in this flight are as follows:

World War II: Fredric Arnold, Gene Bennett, C.H. Clark, Lillian Crosley, Raymond Dickey, Darwin Dixon James Edmisten, Jimmie Godsey, Louis Hamman, Delbert Haynes, John Hess, Robert Horton, Dolores Kochheiser, Harry Maroncelli, Elmer McGinty, Frank Occhiuto, Robert Schueneman, Raymond Valadez, William VanBeber, William Way.

Korean War: Richard Bernhardt, Harold Bohm, Lee Boylan, George Brandt, Casper Brixius, James Comer Jr., Russell Daniels, Ralph Darrough, Ross DeBey, Garold Fox, S. Gilbert Garcia, Ronald Gillman, William Harrison, Virgil Hecker, Allan Hedberg, Dennis Lance, Gordon Leben, Albert Lowe, Jimmy Martin, Francis McKenna Jr., Ernest Medialdea, James Montgomery, Delmer Moss, James Petrie, William Pool, Carroll Quick, Robert Ray, Kennedy Roode, Al Schott, William Sherman, James Shuey, Donald Trettenero, Herbert Wenger, Eugene Ziehm.

Vietnam War: Roy Armstrong, Wilbur Boegli, Cary Bott, Thurman Bradley, Claude Buehrle, Robert Bullard, John Carpenter, Terrence Carroll, Robert Cofone, Larry Coldren, Paul Conley, Byron Daniels, Robert Davis, Mark DeDecker, Michael Doherty, Gary Dorsey, Mark Drake, Dale Eggleston, Jerry Eldred, Gary Ellerman, Daniel Ferguson, William Fisher, Roy Friesen, Glenn Fulcher, Glenn Gaines, Jerry Graham, Paul Graves, Dwight Gutsche, Percey Hamilton II, Christopher Harris, Robert Hawkey, William Hellyer, Thomas James, Norman Kegerries, Michael Krier, LeRoy Lawson, Harold Lif, Peter Lister, Jimmy Lofink, William Margheim, Dallas Maurer, Kevin McGrath, Richard Miller Jr., David Naylor, Wesley Nelson, Richard Norris, Larry Perkins, Robert Randall, Danny Robinett, Robert Rutz, Robert Schrader, Billy Schwindt, Jackie Scott, David Sellers, David Shigley, Tommy Silva, Kenneth Skoglund, Darrell Smith, John Smith, Farrell Spencer, Edward Stephens, Stanley Suichta, Martin Treml, Kerry Tyler, Linda Tyler, Daryl Vande Hoef, Thomas White, Terry Willert, John Young.

It is my distinct pleasure as the U.S. Representative of the 4th District of Colorado to recognize the honor, courage, and sacrifice of these heroes, along with all members of America's Armed Forces. I thank them for their dedication and service to this nation.

RECOGNIZING MALI GARDNER IN HONOR OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History Month, I rise today to honor Mali Gardner, a remarkable individual and public servant in Florida.

Ms. Gardner was first elected to the Clewiston City Commission in October of 1999 and was reelected in 2003, 2008, and 2012. Ms. Gardner's work extends far beyond her important role on the Clewiston City Commission. In 2001, Ms. Gardner was appointed Mayor of Clewiston, where she served until 2010, and was elected Mayor once again in December 2016. Her tireless efforts on behalf of the public led her to become part of Governor Rick Scott's Economic Development Transition Team, where she worked to extend economic opportunities to Floridians across the state.

Ms. Gardner's public service extends beyond her work on the Clewiston City Commission or her mayoral activities. Ms. Gardner is a Paul Harrison Fellow in the Clewiston Rotary Club. As a graduate of Clewiston High School, her commitment to the Clewiston community runs deep. Whether it is fighting for better schools or more economic opportunities for residents of Clewiston, it's a safe bet that Ms. Gardner is standing up for her constituents and neighbors.

I have been privileged to work with Mali in her capacity as mayor, and been impressed time and again with her work ethic and devotion to her community.

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to know Ms. Gardner and I greatly admire her service to the community. I have known Mali for many years, and she has consistently been among the most active, positive, and fore thinking individuals I have been privileged to work with.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing her and her achievements.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DOG AND CAT MEAT TRADE PROHIBITION ACT OF 2017

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Dog and Cat Meat Prohibition Act of 2017, legislation that will prohibit the slaughter and trade of dogs and cats for human consumption in the United States. It might surprise you to learn that consumption of dogs and cats is still legal in 44 states in our nation, where there are no laws prohibiting the purchasing, shipping, transporting, selling, or donating of dogs or cats to be slaughtered for human consumption. This bill will prohibit these actions and impose penalties to ensure that individuals involved in the dog or cat meat trade are held accountable.

The United States' position on this cruel and brutal practice should be unequivocal: dogs and cats should not be killed in this country for the consumption of their meat. It is with utmost importance that the United States unifies animal cruelty laws in all 50 states and explicitly bans the killing of dogs and cats for human consumption.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this body will expeditiously pass this measure. Doing so will reaffirm America's commitment to the humane treatment of our most beloved companions.

RECOGNIZING PATRICIA ANDRADE IN HONOR OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History Month, I rise today to honor Patricia Andrade, an activist and advocate for victims of Venezuela's oppressive regime.

Ms. Andrade has been recognized as a tireless advocate for Venezuelan exiles arriving in South Florida. After witnessing waves of Venezuelans fleeing persecution, Ms. Andrade founded the non-profit organization Venezuela Awareness. This organization has identified the needs of families fleeing persecution and worked to address them. This includes finding living arrangements, arranging for daily needs, and securing legal assistance.

One of the initiatives of Venezuela Awareness is called Raíces Venezolanas, Venezuelan Roots. This program gives donated goods to displaced Venezuelan families. By involving other families, whether of Venezuelan origin or not, this initiative creates a sense of community involvement in these families' lives.

Currently, Ms. Andrade serves as Human Rights Director for Venezuela Awareness and issues annual reports detailing the human rights violations of the Venezuelan government. Her work on human rights abuses in Venezuela has been used by the Department of State, and her advocacy has allowed some cases to be presented to the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Costa Rica. My office trusts her information and relies on her to keep us abreast of grave human rights violations under the Chavez and Maduro regimes.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to know Ms. Andrade and to recognize her remarkable work for Venezuelan exiles and for the State of Florida. Her tireless advocacy on behalf of those without many resources is admirable and has made a real impact on many. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable woman.

HONORING TERRY LYNCH

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take this time to honor my friend, Terry Lynch, and to wish him well upon his retirement from his position as Vice President of the Heat and Frost Insulators International. Mr. Lynch retired from his post at the end of 2016, and for his many years of service and expertise in the field, he is to be commended. Terry has devoted his life to the interests of men and women in the trades, and for his unwavering dedication, he is worthy of the highest praise.

Terry Lynch has served in numerous leadership roles throughout his illustrious career. In 1970, he began his apprenticeship with Asbestos Workers Local 17 in Chicago, Illinois, before receiving his journeyman card in 1974. In 1980, Terry was elected Vice President of Local 17, before being selected to serve as the union's Corresponding, Recording, and Financial Secretary in 1984. Terry served in this capacity until 1986 when he was elected Trustee for Local 17's health, welfare, pension, and annuity funds. He also served as chairman of those jointly trusted funds and for the joint apprenticeship training committee. In 1996, Mr. Lynch was chosen to serve as Business Manager of the Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers Local 17. He was elected to the position from which he retired, International Vice President at Large, in September 2002. Moreover, Terry served the international union as Legislative and Political Director and Health Hazard Administrator.

Each and every day, Terry has cherished the honor and responsibility that comes with being an elected union leader. He has worked tirelessly to end the scourge of asbestos and to promote health initiatives to protect families impacted by mesothelioma and other asbestos-related health conditions. Terry has supported mechanical insulation, creating additional work opportunities for his fellow union members. Mr. Lynch is also a member and past admiral of the Pirates, a group comprised of individuals from union labor and management in Northwest Indiana dedicated to helping children with Down syndrome. Terry is truly an asset to the industry and to the community, and his passion and steadfast dedication serve as an inspiration to us all.

Terry's commitment to the community and his career is exceeded only by his devotion to his amazing family. Terry and his loving wife of forty-seven years, Denise, have one son, Jason, and one grandson, Connor.

I am proud that Terry Lynch is my friend, and I cannot thank him enough for all that he has done for me over the years. I am even more grateful for what he has done for so many for so long, strangers and friends alike.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in honoring Terry Lynch for his outstanding contributions to Local 17 and the Heat and Frost Insulators International, and to wish him well upon his retirement. For many years, Terry has displayed his unwavering loyalty to members of the insulator trades, and his numerous positions have provided him the opportunity to touch the lives of countless individuals.

IN HONOR OF DR. ANN K. SNYDER

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of a dedicated community leader and a dear friend, Dr. Ann Snyder.

Ann's knowledge, faith, and understanding have always been her guide, which may explain her numerous accolades. A committed public servant, Ann served as President and CEO of Interfaith of The Woodlands and the Interfaith Community Clinic for over a decade. Today, she serves on The Woodlands Township and Convention and Visitors Center boards, as well as numerous others.

Ann earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Colorado State University, her Master of Education degree from the University of Missouri at Columbia, and her Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction from Baylor University.

Her past service as Chair of The Woodlands Area Chamber of Commerce, President of The Woodlands Rotary Board, and President of the National Charity League Board, in addition to her work on the boards of the YMCA, Friends of the Library, Junior League, and The Woodlands Junior Golf Association, perfectly illustrates why she was named one of Houston's Most Influential Women in 2015.

Our future leaders hold a special place in Ann's heart. Whether they were students in her classes at the University of Houston, budding scientists participating in the Education for Tomorrow Alliance 'science fairs, students in the Conroe Independent School District where she served on the Board of Trustees, and students at Lone Star College where she served on the facilities review committee. It is too numerous to name all the organizations Ann has helped faithfully guide.

A devoted member of The Woodlands United Methodist Church, Ann's many community honors include: Hometown Hero, Montgomery County Woman of Distinction, South Montgomery County Person of the Year, Citizen of the Year, Rotary International's Service-Above-Self Award, The Woodlands Paul Harris Award, Rotary Hall of Fame, and many more.

In 2013, the Conroe Independent School District ensured that future generations would know of her service by dedicating the Ann K. Snyder Elementary School. I am proud to recognize my friend and community hero, Ann

Snyder, who continues to show us exactly what servant leadership should look like by striving to make our community a better place to call home.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEABEES

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with sincere appreciation and deep respect that I recognize the 75th Anniversary of the United States Navy's military construction force, the Seabees. For their contributions to our military and to countless individuals throughout the world, as well as their courage while facing danger head on, these brave and skilled service members are to be commended.

In December 1941, following the tragic events at Pearl Harbor, the United States Navy recognized the need for the presence of construction battalions on our nation's coasts. It was from this realization that the Seabees came to be. The earliest Seabees, who served under the Navy's Civil Engineer Corps, were recruited with an emphasis on their skills in the construction trades, but due to the dangerous situations they would encounter, these men, who averaged 37 years of age, also needed to be ready and able to fight.

Since World War II, the Seabees have put themselves in harm's way while performing construction projects to aid their fellow service members, as well as civilians affected by both war and natural disasters. In World War II alone, more than 325,000 Seabees served on six continents and were tasked with everything from the construction of airstrips, bridges, and roads to the building of hospitals, warehouses, and an incredible number of huts to house more than 1.5 million military members. During the Korean War, the Seabees were called upon to address a problem that was thought to be impossible. These skilled men managed to cut a mountain in half to make a runway at Cubi Point, located in the Philippines, while constructing a much-needed naval air station in the region. Throughout the war in Vietnam, the Seabees remained active in the construction of bridges, roads, and aircraft facilities while also providing much support to the people of Vietnam through the building of wells, schools, hospitals, and utilities. They also shared their expert knowledge and skills to train the Vietnamese people toward self-sufficiency. Efforts to support construction needs for the military and in supporting those affected by war have continued throughout the Persian Gulf War as well as in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Seabees have also been called upon time and time again to provide much needed assistance, both within our borders and beyond, during times of crisis and devastation. From Hurricane Camille in 1969, to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, to the 2010 and 2011 disastrous earthquakes and tsunami that rocked Haiti and Japan, and many times in between, the Seabees have courageously put themselves in danger while working on rescue and cleanup efforts, as well as the vast rebuilding needed in these dire situations. They have been instrumental in rebuilding roads, housing, and the critical ports that were required for humanitarian supplies to reach these countries. In many of these instances, without the skilled and dedicated efforts of the Seabees, the outcomes would have been much worse for many more people.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring the many dedicated Seabees who have served our nation for the past 75 years. They represent an important part of the United States Military, and are a true example of unwavering patriotism. Let us never forget the service, sacrifice, and contributions they made and continue to make on behalf of our nation, their fellow service members, and those in need throughout the world.

RECOGNIZING ANTHONY FERRERI

HON. DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Anthony Ferreri for his enduring devotion to serving others in need.

A lifelong Staten Islander, Anthony has been at the forefront of providing quality hospital care. President and CEO of Staten Island University Hospital since 2003, he has overseen the hospital's growth with the addition of the Elizabeth A. Connelly Emergency and Trauma Center in 2009 and the Regina M. McGinn, MD Education Center in 2011. This dedication led Modem HealthCare Magazine to award Anthony its Community Leadership Award.

In 2013, after being named as Executive Director of the North Shore—LIJ Health System's Western Region, Anthony Ferreri was then appointed the Executive Vice President just two years later. With his new position came additional duties, as he also became the System's Chief Affiliation Officer and Regional Executive Director for Westchester County. His established track record of effective partnerships with area hospitals and medical centers made him an ideal choice for this position, at which he excelled.

Anthony has also proven himself a steadfast servant to his community. He has served numerous nonprofit boards, among them the Friends of May Chang Foundation, New York Organ Donor Network, and the Snug Harbor Cultural Center. Furthermore, he is the Chairman of the Board of Staten Island's Moore Catholic High School. He has been recognized on multiple occasions for his community service. One such example is that he was only the 12th graduate of New Dorp High School to be inducted into its Hall of Fame. Moreover, he was also awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations.

Mr. Speaker, Anthony Ferreri has spent his life serving his community and providing quality care to hospital patients. I thank him for his lifetime of work and I wish him the best in retirement.

RECOGNIZING NORTHWEST INDIANA'S NEWLY NATURALIZED CITIZENS

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and sincerity that I take this time to congratulate twenty-five individuals who will take their oaths of citizenship on Friday, March 10, 2017. This memorable occasion, presided over by Judge Philip P. Simon, will be held at the United States Courthouse and Federal Building in Hammond, Indiana.

America is a country founded by immigrants. From its beginning, settlers have come from countries around the world to the United States in search of better lives for their families. Oath ceremonies are a shining example of what is so great about the United States of America, that people from all over the world can come together and unite as members of a free, democratic nation. These individuals realize that nowhere else in the world offers a better opportunity for success than here in America.

On March 10, 2017, the following people, representing many nations throughout the world, will take their oaths of citizenship in Hammond, Indiana: Arturo Abel Diaz Pena, Lakshmi Sowmya Koppineedi, Abel Ruiz Romero, Pierre Remon Halteh, Dayanara Calix, Vanessa Yalen Cardenas, Carlos Alberto Uribe Schiaffino, Mohammad Abdelqader, Anna Broda-Stephens, Alicia Castaneda, Amilcar Chavez, Lupita Cortes, Nancy Nasilele Imasiku, Paulina Landeros Salazar, Mi Young Youn, Jay Joohyoung Lee, Xinyu Kevin Liu, Roberto Martinez, Ishaq Mohammed, Mercy Dickson Mtika-Nyirenda, Maria Pacheco, Antonia Roman, Luis Alberto Salas, Maria de Lourdes Sanchez de Flores, and Jacob James Yang.

Although each individual has sought to become a citizen of the United States for his or her own reasons, be it for education, occupation, or to offer their loved ones better lives, each is inspired by the fact that the United States of America is, as Abraham Lincoln described it, a country ". . . of the people, by the people, and for the people." They realize that the United States is truly a free nation. By seeking American citizenship, they have made the decision that they want to live in a place where, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution, they can practice religion as they choose, speak their minds without fear of punishment, and assemble in peaceful protest should they choose to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating these individuals who will become citizens of the United States of America on March 10, 2017. They, too, will be American citizens, and they, too, are guaranteed the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We, as a free and democratic nation, congratulate them and welcome them.

HONORING THE CAREER OF MR. M. WAYNE HUTTON

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Mr. M. Wayne Hutton. After more than 30 years of serving in law enforcement, Mr. Hutton is retiring as Supervising District Attorney Investigator in Merced. Mr. Hutton's service to the community has earned him recognition among law enforcement officials throughout the San Joaquin Valley and California. He has undoubtedly paved a legacy in public service within our community.

Mr. Hutton's career is characterized by a strong work ethic and a passion for justice. Mr. Hutton began his law enforcement career as a Special Agent in the United States Air Force Office of Special Investigations. During his time as a Special Agent, Mr. Hutton was honored and awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal, four Achievement Medals, and the National Defense Medal. He then went on to serve as a Deputy Sheriff in the Merced County Sheriff's Department. He received a Sheriff's Commendation for implementing the first Citizen's Law Enforcement Academy as well as his display of tactical action during a suicide attempt by a citizen. Mr. Hutton also received recognition for his work in the area of domestic violence and was praised by the Senate of the State of California.

Mr. Hutton later served as an Investigator for the District Attorney in Merced County. During his tenure, Mr. Hutton has conducted numerous felony investigations and other high profile major white collar fraud cases. Due to his outstanding work, he was then promoted to Supervising Investigator. Mr. Hutton wrote the Policy and Procedures Manual for the Bureau of Investigation and conducted numerous embezzlement and white collar crime investigations, which included a case that involved a record $1.4 million loss.

Mr. Hutton's decision to become an adjunct instructor at Merced College is another example of his devoted service to the community. Mr. Hutton taught the next generation of law enforcement the skills necessary to write reports and do complete criminal investigations. He has instructed over 300 cadets in the State of California's Peace Officer Standards and Training approved Reserve Peace Officer Training Courses.

Many are saddened by Mr. Hutton's retirement, but his achievements and years of service will not be forgotten. He has been a part of the law enforcement community for 31 years, and it is my hope that his career will inspire others to follow in his footsteps.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the career and achievement of Mr. M. Wayne Hutton. Mr. Hutton has proven to be an inspiring and hardworking individual for Merced County, and I am confident he will continue to demonstrate his passion for public service in the next chapter of his life.

HONORING JUSTICE ROBERT RUCKER

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I take this time to honor a dear friend and one of Indiana's finest citizens, Indiana Supreme Court Justice Robert Rucker, and to wish him well upon his retirement. Throughout his many years of public service, Justice Rucker has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of his fellow Hoosiers. After nearly two decades on the Indiana Supreme Court, Justice Rucker will be retiring this spring. He has left an indelible mark as an outstanding public servant, and for this, he is worthy of the highest praise.

Justice Rucker grew up in Gary, Indiana, and graduated from Gary Roosevelt High School. Before embarking on his legal career, Justice Rucker, a decorated veteran of the United States Army, honorably served his country during the Vietnam War. He went on to receive a bachelor's degree from Indiana University in 1974 before completing the Juris Doctor at the Valparaiso University School of Law in 1976. A devoted legal scholar, Justice Rucker has also earned a Master of Laws degree in the judicial process from the University of Virginia School of Law.

In 1991, following many remarkable years of service to the Northwest Indiana community, Justice Rucker was appointed to the Indiana Court of Appeals by Governor Evan Bayh, becoming the first African American to serve on an Indiana appellate court. In 1999, he was appointed by Governor Frank O'Bannon to the Indiana Supreme Court. Throughout his illustrious judicial career, he has authored more than 1,200 civil and criminal opinions. He has served on numerous boards and committees including the Indiana Commission for Continuing Legal Education, Indiana Trial Lawyers Association, Northwest Indiana Legal Services Organization, and the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association.

Justice Rucker's colleagues could not hold him in higher esteem, stating that ''His work stands as a powerful illustration of the guidance courts provide for the peaceful resolution of disputes encompassing nearly every facet of Hoosier life.'' They have said that what is most admirable about him is his commitment to seek equality for all people. ''He always had the courage and fortitude to protect the rights of all, regardless of their state in life. He has the ability to stand in the shoes of any person and understand their plight.'' For his lifetime of leadership and his truly inspiring career in public service, Justice Rucker is to be commended.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring an outstanding servant of the public for his lifetime of service to the people of Indiana and to wish him well upon his retirement. His continuous effort to improve the quality of life for all Hoosiers is truly admirable, and we have been blessed to have had his presence in the judiciary for so long. Justice Rucker's legacy will endure as a source of pride for the First Congressional District, and his selfless service is to be emulated and admired.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RYAN A. COSTELLO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, on March 1, 2017, I missed one recorded vote on the House floor. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call 121.

RECOGNIZING PURDUE UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take this time to recognize Purdue University Northwest as the college celebrates the first anniversary of Founders Day, which took place on March 6, 2017. The successful unification of two college campuses into a single university led to the creation of Purdue University Northwest, which is one of the first educational mergers in Indiana. The merger creates more choices for students, promotes a regional identity, and contributes to economic development in Northwest Indiana.

In recognition of this day, we honor and commend the outstanding contributions Purdue University Northwest has made to the community of Northwest Indiana and beyond. A comprehensive regional university, Purdue Northwest offers award winning undergraduate and master's degree programs, a nursing practice doctorate, a full athletic program, student housing, international student programs, and innovative research centers and institutes. These programs have been a tremendous benefit to the local community through the fostering of a culture of innovation, which is so crucial in today's ever-changing economy.

During World War II, technical classes were offered to region plant workers, which was part of a national defense training program. Purdue decided to continue to offer courses in Northwest Indiana after the war ended, and in 1946, classes were held at various locations throughout the area. Over time, two campuses emerged, with some 77,000 degrees earned by graduates.

Currently, Purdue Northwest offers more than seventy state-of-the-art programs to approximately 13,350 students. Additionally, innovative and passionate staff, faculty, department heads, and leadership, including former chancellors and the current chancellor, Dr. Thomas L. Keon, are held in the highest esteem for their unwavering dedication, which has contributed to the success of Purdue University Northwest. Their expertise in the field of education has been a remarkable asset to the region, and their tireless efforts have enhanced the lives of Purdue University Northwest's many students and alumni.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring and congratulating Purdue University Northwest on the first anniversary of Founders Day. The merger has improved educational opportunities for the institution's current students

and will positively impact the lives of countless scholars for years to come.

CELEBRATING MARIACHI AZUL Y PLATA'S STATE CHAMPIONSHIP WIN

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mariachi Azul Y Plata of the Ben Bolt Palito Blanco Independent School District for recently winning its second consecutive state mariachi championship in Class 2A.

Ben Bolt High School and the people of South Texas are proud of the musicians of Mariachi Azul Y Plata for their hard work and impressive talent. This accomplishment is a testament to the dedication of these young men and women. Through their state title, Ben Bolt has set the bar for generations of high school mariachi musicians to come.

The mariachi band is composed of 23 students, who jointly participated in auditions against other schools to attend the competition. Azul Y Plata excelled in their division and they continue to embrace the Mariachi culture and keep our Hispanic heritage alive.

Congratulations again to the Palito Blanco High School Mariachi band in Ben Bolt for their tremendous achievement.

HONORING CONNERSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL SPARTANS BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Connersville High School on its 2017 IHSAA Class 4A Sectional 9 championship in boys' basketball.

The Spartans faced off against the New Castle Trojans, with a standing room only crowd watching, at historic New Castle Fieldhouse, the world's largest high school gymnasium.

I am proud of these young men for not only their remarkable win, but also for the Hoosier sportsmanship that they displayed throughout this exciting season. I want to commend Coach Kerry Brown as well as all of the assistant coaches who led these young men to victory.

Congrats, Spartans.

TRIBUTE TO D.M. MILLER

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, one of the finest men I have ever known, Mr. D.M. Miller, was the subject of a lengthy article in the Knoxville News-Sentinel.

The article told of his 48 years in education in my hometown of Knoxville, Tennessee.

Mr. Miller touched thousands of lives in good and positive ways during his career as a teacher, coach, principal, administrator, and school board member.

This country is in a better place today because of the life and service of D.M. Miller.

I include in the RECORD, the story about Mr. Miller in the Knoxville News-Sentinel from March 2, 2017.

[From The Knoxville News-Sentinel, Mar. 2, 2017]

(By Rebecca D. Williams)

You might say D.M. Miller of Knoxville, 91, a longtime educator and coach, was in school most of his life.

''I remember seeing my first basketball game, at South Harriman School, where my aunt was playing. I was 6 or 7 years old,'' he said.

''I was born in Roane County on Oct. 22, 1925. My parents were Ben and Stella Schubert Miller. My dad had a fourth-grade education and my mom had a fifth,'' he said.

By the time he was 10, the family moved to Knoxville and lived in Lonsdale. ''This was during the (Great) Depression, and everybody was poor. My dad was a machinist, a motor mechanic, an electrician and a carpenter. He was without work at times,'' Miller said.

When he was a student at Lonsdale Elementary School, Miller remembers the marching band from Rule High School going on ''strike,'' and marching around Lonsdale, to protest the fact that Rule only had 10 grades. The kids wanted 12 grades so they wouldn't have to walk to Knox High School, Miller said.

Rule High School had 12 grades by the time Miller got there. He lettered in basketball, track and baseball, and was captain of the football team and vice president of his senior class in 1944. Shortly after graduation, Miller joined the U.S. Navy, during World War II.

''Everybody wanted to join up,'' he said. ''My mom wouldn't let me drop out of high school to go in. I graduated from Rule High School on a Friday and went right in the Navy, a boatswain's mate.''

Miller served on the U.S.S. Gosper, an amphibious invasion and casualty evacuation ship in the Pacific. The ship was part of the Okinawa invasion. ''There were four of us boys from Rule High School over there, and two of them got killed at Okinawa. We thought we were going to invade Japan, but thank goodness (the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb) and the war ended,'' he said.

''Then, they sent us to Corregidor (Philippines), and we picked up 2,700 American, Canadian and British prisoners of war. None of them weighed a hundred pounds. They were skeletons,'' he remembered.

After the war, Miller returned to Tennessee and enrolled in Maryville College on the G.I. Bill, where he played football and majored in education. ''All the veterans had come back from the war, and we had a pretty good ball club,'' he said. ''I played on an undefeated team and in the Tangerine Bowl, a forerunner of the Citrus Bowl, in 1946.''

As a senior, he met Viola ''Vi'' Marshall, at a dance. ''I saw her dancing and cut in,'' he said. ''We started going together and got married June 2, 1952.''

In 1950, Miller was hired back at his alma mater, Rule High School, as an assistant coach of several sports and teacher of math, science and health. He eventually became the head football coach of the ''Golden Bears.''

When the drafting teacher died unexpectedly on a Friday, Miller was asked to take over his class. He had only had one class in drafting in high school. ''I studied all weekend to get ready,'' he said. ''I taught on Monday.''

Miller went back to the University of Tennessee at night for a master's degree in administration and became assistant principal of Rule High School for four years, and then principal from 1965 through 1975. It was a time of racial integration of the schools.

''We had on one side of us Lonsdale Homes, and on the other side was College Homes. And in between there was Western Heights, the largest low-income housing project in the area. So we started integrating in 1970. I enrolled 1,625 kids in a school that would hold 1,000. Eight hundred were black. We had the Black Panthers on campus; we had to run them out. It was not easy. I broke up the first fight,'' he said.

Discipline back then involved a ''long paddle,'' Miller said. ''Our kids were used to it. Mamas would call me and say, 'Handle it.' You have to be fair and firm and consistent. There's no in-between,'' he said.

After being principal, Miller was asked to work in the Knoxville City Schools administration building as the administrative assistant to the superintendent. He also served on the control board of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association for nine years, during which time he helped TSSAA build an office in Hermitage, reclassify schools, and implement Title IX. He was inducted into its Hall of Fame as an administrator in 1994.

Miller retired after almost 35 years in the city school system, and was elected to the Knoxville City School Board in 1986. The city and county schools merged in 1987, and Miller was elected to the consolidated board for his second term. ''I'm the only man to have served on both,'' he said.

The Millers had three children, a daughter in 1952, and two sons. Even though he was an educator, Miller's daughter could not go to public schools.

''Our daughter, Elizabeth, we call her Libby, was born handicapped. They told us we should put her in an institution. We just couldn't bear to let her go, so we raised her.

''The (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) hadn't come into effect yet. So she never had any education. We couldn't get her in a regular school. Her speech was a problem. We had her at every speech clinic, and we had her to doctor after doctor, but she never went to school,'' he said.

Libby Miller is 64 today. She lives with the Millers and attends the Sertoma Center each day for adults with intellectual disabilities.

In retirement, Miller has been very active in his church, New Hope Presbyterian. And Miller still keeps in touch with other students from Rule High School, which closed in 1991. In 2015, the Rule Alumni honored Miller with a ''Greatest Among Us'' Award.

''I counted it up one time, and I've been in education about 48 years,'' he said. ''Given my mom and dad's education, it's a miracle.

HONORING 2016 ''MR. AMIGO'' FERNANDO LANDEROS VERDUGO

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Charro Days Fiesta and commend the 2016 "Mr. Amigo," chosen by the Mr. Amigo Association of Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Tamaulipas, in Mexico.

Fernando Landeros Verdugo is a caring philanthropist and founder of the Fundación Teletón. His institution's efforts have united both Latin America and the U.S. over the last

20 years with the purpose of providing opportunities to children with disabilities and their families. His hard work has gained him the admiration of many, and he is an excellent choice to represent the spirit of friendship.

First awarded in 1964, the title of "Mr. Amigo" is an annual tribute to an outstanding Mexican citizen who has made a lasting contribution during the previous year to international solidarity and goodwill. "Mr. Amigo" acts as an ambassador between the United States and Mexico and presides over the annual Charro Days Fiesta.

Charro Days dates back to 1937, when the citizens of Brownsville organized the event in the midst of the Great Depression to celebrate the cultural heritage shared between Brownsville and its sister city across the Rio Grande, Matamoros. The first Charro Days celebration featured a parade with horse-drawn floats and participants dressed in traditional Mexican costumes reminiscent of charros, or Mexican cowboys.

From these humble beginnings, Charro Days has evolved into a multi-day event, which includes dances, fiestas, a children's parade, and the Grand International Parade. Thousands of participants from both sides of the border celebrate these traditions each year.

The 80th annual Charro Days celebration commenced on February 19th, with a grito, or celebratory yell, and on February 25th, the Mayor of Brownsville and the Mayor of Matamoros met at the Gateway International Bridge to extend their hands across the border, symbolizing the friendship between the two cities.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to honor the Charro Days Fiesta and for joining me in recognizing the importance of this annual celebration, which continues to strengthen the relationship between Brownsville and Matamoros, and the bonds between the United States and Mexico.

HONORING GREENSBURG COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL PIRATES BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Greensburg Community High School on its 2017 IHSAA Class 3A Sectional 29 championship in boys' basketball.

The Pirates faced off against the Lawrenceburg Tigers on their home court and defeated them 55–41.

I am proud of these young men for not only their remarkable win, but also for the Hoosier sportsmanship that they displayed throughout this exciting season. I want to commend Coach Stacy Meyer as well as all of the assistant coaches who led these young men to victory.

Congrats, Pirates.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL BALISTRIERE

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Michael "Mike" Balistriere who is retiring from Milwaukee Area Labor Council on March 17, 2017. Mike is a labor leader, veteran, father and advocate.

Mike Balistriere has been a proud union member since 1969 when he began his career at Evinrude Motors. Mike served in Vietnam as a United States Marine from 1969–1971 and returned to Evinrude after his service. He became an active member with the United Steelworkers (USW) Local 1302, while at Evinrude and was elected Chief Steward in 1974 and served on the bargaining committee for 15 years. As a member of USW Local 1302, Mike served on a variety of committees at the behest of his union.

Mr. Balistriere was called upon by his International Union to help with the Firestone/Bridgestone strike as part of a statewide committee. The United Steelworkers won that hard fought fight benefiting the workers which led to the merger of the United Steelworkers and Rubber Workers. In 1997, Mike left Evinrude to assume the position of Community Service Liaison at the United Way of Greater Milwaukee and later for the Milwaukee Area Labor Council.

In his position as Community Service Liaison, Mr. Balistriere has served as a member of the AFL-CIO Union Veterans Council, Co-Founder of the Veterans Community Relations Team, and Treasurer for the War Memorial Board. Further, he worked closely with the HIRE Center, Wisconsin Election Protection, and chaired the St. Bens Annual Cook Out for the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County for the past 10 years.

Some of Mike's notable achievements include preventing the hostile takeover of the Milwaukee County War Memorial, moving the statue of General MacArthur to the lakefront, meeting with the Japanese, Korean, Australian, and the Philippines consulates in Chicago about the Gen. MacArthur Memorial Lakefront Event. One of Mike Balistriere's proudest moments was to lead the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance before President Barack Obama speeches at both the Bradley Center and Laborfest.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to know Mike Balistriere and work with him for many years on labor issues, veterans' issues and voting rights. I join with friends and his wife, Cindy and children Rebecca, Michael Jr., Sarah, and Nathan to congratulate him as he transitions into a different phase of his life.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Mike Balistriere and to call him friend. The citizens of the Fourth Congressional District and the State of Wisconsin are privileged to have someone of ability and dedicated service working on their behalf for so many years. I thank him for all that he has done. I am honored for these reasons to pay tribute to Mike Balistriere.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF OLMITO WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION, INC.

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Olmito Water Supply Corporation, Inc. on their 50th year of service.

Olmito Water Supply Corporation (WSC) was certified as a non-profit in 1967 and is located in Cameron County. For 50 years, the leadership of its Board of Directors and dedication of its employees has brought vital services to the region. Since its foundation, the corporation has provided safe tap water and sanitary sewer service to the rural community of Olmito, Texas.

Today, Olmito WSC has established 2,175 water connections that serve over 8,000 'colonia' residents. Colonias are unincorporated settlements along the U.S.-Mexico border that lack living necessities such as potable water, sewer systems, electricity, paved roads, and sanitary housing. The corporation's ability to provide clean water and sanitary sewer service has raised the quality of life for residents, and has laid the infrastructure for the creation of new subdivisions and commercial establishments in the area.

The Olmito Water Supply Corporation has made a lasting, positive impact on our community, and it will continue to play a critical role in the improvement of South Texas. I rise today to congratulate the Olmito Water Supply Corporation as it celebrates 50 years of success.

HONORING DR. LESTER TENNEY

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Lester Irwin Tenney of Carlsbad, California, who recently passed away on February 24, 2017 at the age of 96. I am proud to recognize his memory as his Congressman and admire his life's work to strengthen ties with our allies in Japan.

Dr. Tenney served our nation during World War II on the 192nd Tank Battalion in the Philippines. Immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, his battalion continuously fought against the Japanese assault until his commanders surrendered on April 9, 1942. He became a Prisoner of War and survived the infamous Bataan Death March, while thousands of his American and Filipino counterparts perished. He was then forced to work in a Japanese coal mine until the conclusion of the war. Upon returning to the U.S., Dr. Tenney studied business at San Diego State University, taught finance at Arizona State University, and started his own financial planning firm.

After publishing his memoirs documenting the atrocities he experienced as a POW, Dr. Tenney made it his mission to forgive his captors and establish friendships with Japanese citizens. As national commander of the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, he met the Japanese Ambassador to the United States,

Ichiro Fujisaki, and arranged for a public apology on behalf of Japan to the surviving POWs. He also worked with the Japanese government to establish the U.S.-Japan POW Friendship Program, which allows former POWs and their families to visit Japan annually. Finally, Dr. Tenney received a personal apology from Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2015 and just last month received a letter of apology from Mitsubishi Materials Corporation, one of the companies that profited from POW labor at the time. I have been fortunate enough to know Dr. Tenney. His courage and tenacity are an inspiration to all, and his moving story demonstrates how much impact one person can have on world affairs.

Dr. Tenney's legacy is admirable and his impressive achievements in U.S.-Japan relations will be remembered for years to come. He is survived by his wife, Betty, and his son, two stepsons, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. I extend my condolences to his family in this difficult time.

HONORING NORTHEASTERN HIGH SCHOOL KNIGHTS BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Northeastern High School on its 2017 IHSAA Class 2A Sectional 41 championship in boys' basketball.

The Knights faced off against the Union County Patriots, defeating them 54–41.

I am proud of these young men for not only their remarkable win, but also for the Hoosier sportsmanship that they displayed throughout this exciting season. I want to commend Coach Brent Ross as well as all of the assistant coaches who led these young men to victory.

Congrats, Knights.

HONORING THE LIFELONG CONTRIBUTIONS OF PAUL KALINIAN

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Fresnan Paul Kalinian, a philanthropic and award winning filmmaker known especially for his documentary on Armenian-American William Saroyan.

Paul Kalinian was born in Beirut, Lebanon on February 14, 1932, but spent the majority of his childhood in Damascus, Syria. At age 14, he discovered his passion for photography and began learning the skill at the Photo Gulbenk Studio in Damascus. Four years later, he returned to Beirut, opening his first photography studio, Photo Paul in 1961. In 1964, he moved to Canada, then to the United States to further pursue a future in photography and filmmaking. Attending the New York Institute of Photography, Paul received degrees in Photography and Motion Picture Production in 1967. That same year, he returned to Beirut to marry his longtime sweetheart, Araxie Deuvletian. They immigrated to the United States and were blessed with twins: a son Harold and a daughter Susie, making Fresno, California their permanent home, the birthplace of his childhood hero William Saroyan.

In 1972, Paul opened his second studio, Paul's Photography Studio, in Fresno, California. Throughout the years, he photographed countless people from all walks of life, from politicians and generals, to models, musicians and clergy leaders. His works have been published in over a dozen books, and numerous newspapers and magazines, and have been displayed in over a dozen different locations such as government buildings, museums, schools and libraries.

Aside from having a passion for photography, Paul had a dream of one day being able to photograph internationally renowned Armenian-American Pulitzer Prize and Oscar winner, William Saroyan. After 12 years of chasing this dream, Paul was finally able to capture portraits of the famous writer and playwright on March 26, 1976. One such characteristic portrait was selected by the United States and Soviet Union Postal Services, among 400 other photographs, to be used for their Commemorative Postal Stamps. This was the first time in history that an individual was selected as a humanitarian symbol of peace and friendship between two superpower nations. First-day-issue ceremonies took place simultaneously on May 22, 1991 in Fresno, California and in Yerevan, Armenia.

After William Saroyan's death in 1981, Paul created a 22 minute presentation of Saroyan's portraits, along with his narration "How I shot Saroyan," which was shown over 100 times in various cities, and televised on public stations. In light of the positive response, Paul and his daughter, Dr. Susie Kalinian, decided to collaborate and create a documentary film about Saroyan's life and works, narrated by another famous Fresnan whom Kalinian admires and respects, television and motion picture star, actor Mike Connors. Entitled William Saroyan; The Man The Writer, the film was written and directed by Paul and produced by his daughter. It is a symbol of Paul's admiration for Saroyan as one of the greatest writers of our time. The film was created to preserve and present Saroyan's works, recognize his dual cultural heritage, and spread his message of peace and hope around the world. The film, a labor of love, won numerous awards of recognition, including six international film festival awards and a Gold Award for Best Documentary Film among 12 competing nations. The film premiered on April 9, 1991 in Fresno at the William Saroyan Theatre. Today, over one million people have seen the film in more than 60 cities in 19 countries around the world. This film not only pays tribute to Saroyan, but pays tribute to Armenians and Fresno, California.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating a man who has dedicated his life to preserving American and Armenian culture through the art of photography and film. It is both fitting and appropriate that we recognize Paul Kalinian for his educational and philanthropic contributions to his community, his country, and our world. I join Paul's family in wishing him health and happiness for years to come.

HONORING SOUTH RIPLEY RAIDERS BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor South Ripley High School on its 2017 IHSAA Class 2A Sectional 45 championship in boys' basketball.

The Raiders faced off against the Milan Indians, defeating them 47–42.

I am proud of these young men for not only their remarkable win, but also for the Hoosier sportsmanship that they displayed throughout this exciting season. I want to commend Coach Travis Wrightsman as well as all of the assistant coaches who led these young men to victory.

Congrats, Raiders.

COMMEMORATING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF PUBLIC.RESOURCE.ORG

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the tenth anniversary of Public.Resource.Org, a nonprofit organization promoting openness and transparency in all three branches of the federal government.

In the past decade, organizations like Public Resource have been instrumental in utilizing modern technology and the Internet as vehicles to make the proceedings and reports of the House of Representatives readily available to the general public. While I served as Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, our staff worked with Public Resource to upload a video archive of all its proceedings to the Internet and used official transcripts to add closed captioning to our hearings. In addition to the Oversight Committee, their team uploaded over 3,000 hearings from all committees to the Internet Archive, particularly documenting activity in the House from 2005 through 2011.

In the Judicial Branch, Public Resource published all the historical opinions of the U.S. Court of Appeals and millions of pages of briefs from significant judicial opinions. They also worked with numerous executive agencies, including the Department of Defense, the Archivist of the United States, the National Technical Information Service, and the Internal Revenue Service to post thousands of government videos and upload over 9 million tax documents of nonprofit organizations for the public record.

As the organization celebrates this milestone, I would like to congratulate Public Resource for its service to Congress and the ongoing effort to provide American citizens with the tools they need to scrutinize the activities of the federal government.

FINDLAY NAMED TOP MICROPOLITAN COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES

HON. ROBERT E. LATTA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the City of Findlay, Ohio for being named a 2016 Top Micropolitan Community in the United States. This is the third year in a row that Findlay has been selected by Site Selection magazine for this honor.

Site Selection ranks micropolitan areas, which have populations ranging between 10,000 and 50,000, by evaluating different sets of criteria for opportunities to provide proven sustainable success. Findlay, once again, ranked highest out of these cities with 22 projects that secure and grow the local economic growth of the community.

Findlay has made quite a name for itself by focusing their efforts on steady economic development. Site Selection has deemed this the ''Findlay Formula,'' the building of strong, reliable partnerships from the local government arena to both business and nonprofit organizations.

Mr. Speaker, the success in Findlay is a testament to the strong leadership and tight-knit community that exists in Hancock County. I'm excited about potential future development and the benefits it will bring to residents and businesses that are proud to call Findlay home. Congratulations once again to the City of Findlay for being named a top Micropolitan community.

HONORING HAUSER HIGH SCHOOL JETS BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Hauser High School on its 2017 IHSAA Class 1A Sectional 60 championship in boys' basketball.

The Jets faced off against the Oldenburg Academy Twisters, defeating them 64–61.

I am proud of these young men for not only their remarkable win, but also for the Hoosier sportsmanship that they displayed throughout this exciting season. I want to commend Coach Bob Nobbe as well as all of the assistant coaches who led these young men to victory.

Congrats, Jets.

HONORING PACKANACK LAKE FIRE COMPANY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 75th Anniversary of the Packanack Lake Fire Company No. 5, located in Wayne, New Jersey.

Beginning in 1942, during the midst of World War II, the Packanack Lake community of 500 homes at the time was very concerned about the threat of attacks from the Axis powers. Six residents found the need for a local fire department in order to provide protection to the community. The residents applied for use of Civil Defense equipment. With great effort, they were organized as a civil defense unit and equipment was allocated. Funds were later loaned in order to purchase a truck from a nearby fire company in Mountain View, New Jersey. Over the years two more trucks were added; increasing the capabilities of the fire company. In 1946, the state of New Jersey passed legislation that officially recognized the Packanack Lake Fire and Emergency Squad as a fire company, and allowed Wayne Township to allocate extra funds to the emergency squad. After several expansions of the emergency squad, the need for a fire house emerged. Property was donated by Packanack Homes and a two story fire house was built by the volunteer firefighters themselves. Materials were gathered from nearby demolished buildings and construction was complete by 1948. While construction was nearing completion the spouses of the volunteers formed the Packanack Lake Ladies Auxiliary who dedicated their time raising funds and supporting the fire company. And, the Auxiliary remains very active today!

Today, the fire company is a prominent entity in Packanack Lake. Membership has never been higher and they are now equipped with four trucks and one heavy rescue truck. With over 700 calls a year the fire company is always utilizing these resources to the best of their abilities. From six residents who saw the necessity to protect their community, grew a fine fire company who still supports and protects their community.

Like all fire companies, the Packanack Lake Company is more than fighting fires. From serving as a safe haven during natural disasters, floods in particular, the first to respond to home emergencies, and to functioning as a social hub for the community to connect with one another, I commend Company #5 for its distinguished 75 years and its support of the four other Wayne companies and their mutual aid to neighboring towns.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and our colleagues join me in congratulating Packanack Lake Fire and Emergency Squad No. 5 on the occasion of its 75th Anniversary.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1607–S1647

Measures Introduced: Twenty-seven bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 536–562, S.J. Res. 34, and S. Res. 82. **Pages S1638–39**

Measures Passed:

Federal Land Policy and Management Act Rule: By 51 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. 82), Senate passed H.J. Res. 44, disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to Bureau of Land Management regulations that establish the procedures used to prepare, revise, or amend land use plans pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. **Pages S1609–25**

Modern Slavery: Committee on Foreign Relations was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 68, raising awareness of modern slavery, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1647**

Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory 75th Anniversary: Senate agreed to S. Res. 82, congratulating the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Laboratory. **Page S1647**

Measures Considered:

Department of Education Rule–Agreement: Senate began consideration of H.J. Res. 58, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to teacher preparation issues, after agreeing to the motion to proceed. **Pages S1625–33**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the joint resolution at approximately 9:30 a.m., on Wednesday, March 8, 2017. **Pages S1625, S1647**

Small Business Capital Formation Enhancement Act Referral—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be discharged from further consideration of S. 416, to amend the Small Business Investment Incentive Act of 1980 to require an annual review by the Securities and Exchange Commission of the annual government-business forum on capital formation, and the bill be referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. **Page S1623**

Verma Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Seema Verma, of Indiana, to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services. **Page S1625**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Thursday, March 9, 2017. **Page S1625**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S1625**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

R. Alexander Acosta, of Florida, to be Secretary of Labor.

Ajit Varadaraj Pai, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2016. **Page S1647**

Messages from the House: **Page S1635**

Measures Referred: **Pages S1635–36**

Executive Communications: **Pages S1636–38**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S1638**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1639–41**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1641–47**

Additional Statements:

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1647**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S1647**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—82) **Page S1625**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:16 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the

remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1647.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

RUSSIA'S POLICIES AND INTENTIONS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs concluded a hearing to examine a broader understanding of Russia's policies and intentions toward specific countries in Europe, after receiving testimony from Pavlo Klimkin, Ukraine Minister of Foreign Affairs; Piotr Wilczek, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the United States; Andris Teikmanis, Ambassador of Latvia to the United States; David Bakradze, Ambassador of Georgia to the United States; Rolandas Krisciunas, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the United States; and Eerik Marmei, Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to the United States.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Lt. Gen. Herbert R. McMaster Jr., USA, for reappointment to be Lieutenant General.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Rod J. Rosenstein, of Maryland, to be Deputy Attorney General, who was introduced by Senators Cardin and Van Hollen, and Rachel L. Brand, of Iowa, to be Associate Attorney General, who was introduced by Senators Grassley and Ernst, both of the Department of Justice, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 46 public bills, H.R. 1374–1419; and 3 resolutions, H. Res. 173, 176–177 were introduced. **Pages H1592–94**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1595–96**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 375, to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the "Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse" (H. Rept. 115–23);

H.R. 1174, to provide a lactation room in public buildings (H. Rept. 115–24);

H.R. 985, to amend the procedures used in Federal court class actions and multidistrict litigation proceedings to assure fairer, more efficient outcomes for claimants and defendants, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–25);

H. Res. 174, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1301) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–26); and

H. Res. 175, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 725) to amend title 28, United States Code, to prevent fraudulent joinder (H. Rept. 115–27). **Page H1592**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Simpson to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1539**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:48 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H1544**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rev. Gary Studniewski, St. Peter's Catholic Church, Washington, DC. **Page H1544**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:13 p.m. and reconvened at 5 p.m. **Page H1545**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Naming the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic: H.R. 1362, to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Pago Pago, American Samoa, the Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin VA Clinic, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 411 yeas to 2 nays, Roll No. 127; **Pages H1545–47, H1571**

Designating the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in

Nashville, Tennessee, as the "Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse": H.R. 375, to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 719 Church Street in Nashville, Tennessee, as the "Fred D. Thompson Federal Building and United States Courthouse"; **Pages H1547–50, H1574**

Fairness For Breastfeeding Mothers Act of 2017: H.R. 1174, amended, to provide a lactation room in public buildings; and **Pages H1550–53**

National Aeronautics and Space Administration Transition Authorization Act of 2017: S. 442, to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. **Pages H1553–70**

Question of Privilege: Representative Eshoo rose to a question of the privileges of the House and submitted a resolution. The Chair ruled that the resolution did not present a question of the privileges of the House. Subsequently, Representative Eshoo appealed the ruling of the chair and Representative McCarthy moved to table the appeal. Agreed to the motion to table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair by a recorded vote of 227 ayes to 186 noes with 1 answering "present", Roll No. 128. **Pages H1571–74**

Senate Messages: Messages received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appear on pages H1571.

Quorum Calls Votes: One yea-and-nay vote and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1571, H1573–74. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Committee Meetings

INNOCENT PARTY PROTECTION ACT; DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017

Committee On Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 725, the "Innocent Party Protection Act"; H.R. 1301, the "Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2017". The committee granted, by voice vote, a closed rule for H.R. 1301. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the bill shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill. The rule provides one motion to recommit. The rule provides that the chair of the Committee on Appropriations may insert in the Congressional Record not later than Wednesday, March 8, 2017, such material as he may deem explanatory of H.R. 1301. The Committee granted, by voice vote, a structured rule for H.R. 725. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the bill shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill. The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instruction. Testimony was heard from Chairman Frelinghuysen, and Representatives Visclosky, King of Iowa, and Cohen.

SHAPING THE FUTURE: CONSOLIDATING AND IMPROVING VA COMMUNITY CARE

Committee On Veterans' Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Shaping the Future: Consolidating and Improving VA Community Care." Testimony was heard from Senator McCain; David J. Shulkin, M.D., Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs; Michael J. Missal, Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Veterans Affairs; and Randy Williamson, Director, Health Care, Government Accountability Office.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine investing in America, focusing on funding our nation's transportation infrastructure needs, 10 a.m., SD–192.

Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine saving lives through medical research, 10:30 a.m., SD–138.

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, to receive a closed briefing on cybersecurity from the Defense Science Board, 2:30 p.m., SVC–217.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, to hold hearings to examine the global nuclear weapons environment, 2:30 p.m., SR–222.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold an oversight hearing to examine the Federal Communications Commission, 10 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold hearings to examine an original bill entitled, ''Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act'', 10 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Elaine C. Duke, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, 9:30 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: to hold an oversight hearing to examine Indian affairs priorities for the Trump Administration, 2:15 p.m., SD–628.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled ''Members' Day'', 10 a.m., 2362–B Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, hearing entitled ''Members' Day'', 2 p.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, hearing for public witnesses, 10 a.m., 2358–B Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, hearing on quality of life in the military, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Military Assessment of Nuclear Deterrence Requirements'', 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled ''The Current State of U.S. Army Readiness'', 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, hearing entitled ''An Independent Fleet Assessment of the U.S. Navy'', 3:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1304, the ''Self-Insurance Protection Act''; H.R. 1101, the ''Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2017''; and H.R. 1313, the ''Preserving Employee Wellness Programs Act'', 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Full Committee, markup on a committee print of Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Repeal and Replace of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; and H. Res. 154, of inquiry requesting the President of the United States and directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to transmit certain information to the House of Representatives relating to plans to repeal or replace the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the health-related measures of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, 10:30 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, March 8, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 876, the ''Aviation Employee Screening and Security Enhancement Act of 2017''; H.R. 1238, the ''Securing our Agriculture and Food Act''; H.R. 1249, the ''DHS Multiyear Acquisition Strategy Act of 2017''; H.R. 1252, the ''DHS Acquisition Authorities Act of 2017''; H.R. 1258, the ''HSA Technical Corrections Act''; H.R. 1282, the ''DHS Acquisition Review Board Act of 2017''; H.R. 1294, the ''Reducing DHS Acquisition Cost Growth Act''; H.R. 1297, the ''Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Technical Corrections Act of 2017''; H.R. 1302, the ''Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel Exercise Act of 2017''; H.R. 1309, the ''TSA Administrator Modernization Act of 2017''; H.R. 1353, the ''Transparency in Technological Acquisitions Act of 2017''; the ''Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017''; a bill to be introduced prior to consideration by Chairman McCaul; the ''Homeland Security for Children Act''; and the ''Department of Homeland Security Acquisition Innovation Act'', 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, markup on a committee funding resolution, 10:45 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Department of Homeland Security's Proposed Regulations Reforming the Investor Visa Program'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1293, to amend title 5, United States Code, to require that the Office of Personnel Management submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by Federal employees; the ''Official Time Reform Act of 2017''; H.R. 653, the ''Federal Intern Protection Act of 2017''; H.R. 680, the ''Eliminating Pornography from Agencies Act''; H. Res. 38, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that offices attached to the seat of Government should not be required to exercise their offices in the District of Columbia; the ''SOAR Reauthorization Act''; H.R. 745, the ''Federal Records Modernization Act of 2017''; and the ''Electronic Message Preservation Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Government Operations; and Subcommittee on Healthcare, Benefits, and Administrative Rules, joint hearing entitled ''Examining IRS Customer Service Challenges'', 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 720, the ''Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act of 2017''; H.R. 985, the ''Fairness in Class Action Litigation Act of 2017'', 3 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Space, hearing entitled ''Regulating Space: Innovation, Liberty, and International Obligations'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Small Business Cybersecurity: Federal Resources and Coordination'', 11 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Aviation, hearing entitled ''Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: Air Transportation in

the United States in the 21st Century'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 369, to eliminate the sunset of the Veterans Choice Program, and for other purposes; H.R. 1181, the ''Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act''; H.R. 1259, the ''VA Accountability First Act of 2017''; H.R. 1367, to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire and retain physician and other employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the entitlement to educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs for members of the Armed Forces awarded the Purple Heart, 11 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Full Committee, markup on Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Remuneration from Certain Insurers; Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Repeal of Tanning Tax; Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Repeal of Certain Consumer Taxes; Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Repeal of Net Investment Income Tax; and Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Repeal and Replace of Health-Related Tax Policy, 10:30 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

9:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 8

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will continue consideration of H.J. Res. 58, Department of Education Rule.

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

10 a.m., Wednesday, March 8

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of H.R. 1301—Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2017 (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of measures under suspension of the Rules.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Congressional Record

The *Congressional Record* (USPS 087–390). The Periodicals postage is paid at Washington, D.C. The public proceedings of each House of Congress, as reported by the Official Reporters thereof, are printed pursuant to directions of the Joint Committee on Printing as authorized by appropriate provisions of Title 44, United States Code, and published for each day that one or both Houses are in session, excepting very infrequent instances when two or more unusually small consecutive issues are printed one time. ¶Public access to the *Congressional Record* is available online through the U.S. Government Publishing Office, at *www.govinfo.gov*, free of charge to the user. The information is updated online each day the *Congressional Record* is published. For more information, contact the GPO Customer Contact Center, U.S. Government Publishing Office. Phone 202–512–1800, or 866–512–1800 (toll-free). E-Mail, *contactcenter@gpo.gov*. ¶To place an order for any of these products, visit the U.S. Government Online Bookstore at: bookstore.gpo.gov. Mail orders to: Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197–9000, or phone orders to 866–512–1800 (toll-free), 202–512–1800 (D.C. area), or fax to 202–512–2104. Remit check or money order, made payable to the Superintendent of Documents, or use VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or GPO Deposit Account. ¶Following each session of Congress, the daily *Congressional Record* is revised, printed, permanently bound and sold by the Superintendent of Documents in individual parts or by sets. ¶With the exception of copyrighted articles, there are no restrictions on the republication of material from the *Congressional Record*.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Superintendent of Documents, *Congressional Record*, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, along with the entire mailing label from the last issue received.