

A bill (H.R. 1725) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit certain reports relating to medical evidence submitted in support of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 1725) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

VETERANS CARE FINANCIAL PROTECTION ACT OF 2017

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3122 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title. The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3122) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include on the internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs a warning regarding dishonest, predatory, or otherwise unlawful practices targeting individuals who are eligible for increased pension on the basis of need for regular aid and attendance, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 3122) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

LEXINGTON VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4533, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4533) to designate the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Lexington, Kentucky, as the "Lexington VA Health Care System" and to make certain other designations.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 4533) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

APPOINTMENTS AUTHORITY

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming adjournment of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the majority and minority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences, or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses, or by order of the Senate.

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

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the majority leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 93-112, as amended by Public Law 112-166, and further amended by Public Law 113-128, the reappointment of the following to serve as a member of the National Council on Disability: Neil Romano of Maryland.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2018, THROUGH MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2018

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn, to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted, on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, February 16 at 12 noon; Tuesday, February 20 at 5 p.m.; Friday, February 23 at 2 p.m. I further ask that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, February 23, it next convene at 3 p.m., Monday, February 26, and 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; further, that following the closing of morning business, Senator PETERS be recognized to deliver Washington's Farewell Address; further, that following the address, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Branch nomination; finally, that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture vote on the Branch nomination occur at 5:30 p.m., Monday, February 26.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come be-

fore the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:58 p.m., adjourned until Friday, February 16, 2018, at 12 noon.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NAOMI C. EARP, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE, VICE JOE LEONARD, JR.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

THELMA DRAKE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATOR, VICE PETER M. ROGOFF, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

JAMES REILLY, OF COLORADO, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, VICE SUZETTE M. KIMBALL.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOSEPH CELLA, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI, THE REPUBLIC OF NAURU, THE KINGDOM OF TONGA, AND TUVALU.

DAVID B. CORNSTEIN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO HUNGARY.

GEORGETTE MOSBACHER, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

JEAN CAROL HOVLAND, OF SOUTH DAKOTA, TO BE COMMISSIONER OF THE ADMINISTRATION FOR NATIVE AMERICANS, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE LILLIAN A. SPARKS.

THE JUDICIARY

MARK JEREMY BENNETT, OF HAWAII, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT, VICE RICHARD R. CLIFTON, RETIRED.

NANCY E. BRASEL, OF MINNESOTA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA, VICE ANN D. MONTGOMERY, RETIRED.

THOMAS S. KLEEH, OF WEST VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA, VICE IRENE M. KEELEY, RETIRED.

ANDREW S. OLDHAM, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT, VICE EDWARD C. PRADO, RETIRING.

PETER J. PHIPPS, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, VICE TERENCE F. MCVEERY, RETIRED.

MICHAEL Y. SCUDDER, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SEVENTH CIRCUIT, VICE RICHARD A. POSNER, RETIRED.

AMY J. ST. EVE, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SEVENTH CIRCUIT, VICE ANN CLAIRE WILLIAMS, RETIRED.

ERIC C. TOSTRUD, OF MINNESOTA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA, VICE DONOVAN W. FRANK, RETIRED.

CHARLES J. WILLIAMS, OF IOWA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF IOWA, VICE LINDA R. READE, RETIRED.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate February 15, 2018:

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

JOHN MARSHALL MITNICK, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

JOHN C. DEMERS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

NEIL JACOBS, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

JOSEPH D. BROWN, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

MATTHEW D. KRUEGER, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

NORMAN BUELL ARFLACK, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.