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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 15, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE E. B. HOLDING to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, 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 each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

SENIOR HUNGER IN AMERICA

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, for the past 2 months, I have been speaking each week about hunger in America. Today, I want to focus on hunger among our senior citizens, which is a silent scourge in our Nation.

Over 49 million Americans are hungry; and of those, 8.3 million are seniors. That's one in seven seniors and nearly 15 percent of everyone over 60 years old. In fact, from 2001 to 2009, hunger among Americans over the age of 50 increased by nearly 80 percent—80 percent. That is unconscionable.

One reason for this significant rise in senior hunger is the economy. The recession has made hunger in America worse for everyone, and it's been particularly bad among people between the ages of 50 and 59, a population too young for Social Security and Medicare, but too old for programs that target families with children. And it's not just the very poor. In fact, between 2007 and 2009, the most dramatic increase in hunger was among those whose annual incomes were twice the poverty line.

Food—good, healthy food—is important at all ages, but it is critical for young children and for senior citizens. For kids, nutritious food is critical for physical and mental development. For seniors, good, healthy food is critical for entirely different, but no less important, reasons.

Hunger can exacerbate existing medical conditions, and many medications need to be taken with food. Taking some medicine on an empty stomach can result in illness or hospitalization, problems that not only result in increased medical costs, but can also be deadly to people with reduced immune systems.

A common problem is that many seniors are homebound, unable to travel to grocery schools or food banks to get food. A homebound senior can be a forgotten senior. It's easy to see why senior hunger is a hidden problem. In many cases, the hungry senior is literally hidden away behind a closed door.

That's why it is so important to have senior advocacy groups like AARP, the National Council on Aging, and AmpleHarvest.org—to name a few—who focus on senior hunger. AARP has its Drive to End Hunger campaign with NASCAR and Jeff Gordon. The National Council on Aging is working with Feeding America and other food banks to prioritize and target hunger among seniors. AmpleHarvest.org is working with seniors to grow their own food. And of course, there is Meals on Wheels, which delivers food directly to homebound seniors.

A recent Brown University report found that for every additional $25 a State spends on Meals on Wheels each year for a person over 65, the low-care nursing home population decreases by 1 percent. That helps save Medicaid dollars and lowers health care costs overall.

In fact, the cost of feeding a senior for 1 year through Meals on Wheels is roughly equal to the cost of just 1 day in the hospital. And the average patient stays in the hospital for almost 5 days. Funding for Meals on Wheels is an important investment to decreasing health care spending.

I also want to highlight the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which helps more than 860,000 seniors who make less than $15,000 per year to have access to local fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers markets. A qualified senior is awarded between $20 and $50 to spend at their local farmers markets. Over 19,000 farmers participate and benefit from the money seniors spend through this program.

Wholesome Wave is an organization that doubles the purchasing power of the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Its Double Value Coupon program operates at more than 300 farmers markets in 26 States and the District of Columbia. Boston Mayor Tom Menino has a similar program called the Boston Bounty Bucks. These programs allow low-income seniors on fixed incomes to buy more fresh fruits and vegetables with their limited funds.

Mr. Speaker, these are terrific programs, but they simply can't do it all. In the case of senior hunger, we need to make sure that groups like Meals on Wheels and programs like Senior

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Farmers' Market Nutrition Program are well funded. But we also need to work with doctors and nurses, with Medicare and Medicaid, and with other health care professionals to treat hunger as a health issue. We need to prevent costly hospital readmissions that are preventable with proper nutrition. We need to ensure that seniors aren't falling through the cracks and that they aren't going hungry.

Mr. Speaker, we need Presidential leadership to End Hunger Now, and we need a White House conference on food and nutrition to talk about senior hunger; to brainstorm, plan, and execute a national antihunger plan that will truly end hunger now.

We are the most prosperous Nation in the world. There is absolutely no reason why anyone should go hungry in the United States of America. It is especially shameful that so many older people, people who have made this country great, find themselves in a position where they are hungry. We can do something about it. I hope we come together, and I hope we end hunger now.

CHAINED CPI

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of talk in Washington, D.C., about something called chained CPI. A lot of people don't know what that means. We have assurances from the White House and the Republicans who originated this idea. It's an innocuous sort of little change to Social Security, veterans benefits, and other programs, because we overstate inflation in the CPI.

Actually, particularly for seniors, the reverse is true. The consumer price index, as measured, significantly understates inflation that impacts seniors because seniors have a different buying pattern than 20-year-olds. They're not out buying the latest iPhone. They're buying a lot of medical care, going up much faster than measured inflation, pharmaceuticals going up at phenomenal, obscene rates. Housing, energy, and all those things make up a bigger percentage of their budget in retirement.

For years, I have proposed legislation to accurately measure the cost of living for seniors, which actually would increase their annual cost-of-living adjustments. But now come the White House and the Republicans to say we're overstating inflation. Let's just use chained CPI, it doesn't matter, it's all about substitution. If they can't afford beef, they'll do chicken; if they can't do chicken, they'll do pasta; if they can't do pasta, they'll buy dog food; if they can't afford that, they'll starve. That's kind of the bottom line of these pointy-headed economists out there on how these sort of weird theories work.

Here's a graphic that demonstrates this a little better. This shows for a retired single woman, widowed or otherwise, how much food would be lost on an annual basis with chained CPI as it eats away at the annual adjustments and the things that she purchases go up faster and faster.

□ 1210

Each shopping cart represents a weekly food budget of $53. That's not exactly living high on the hog here. At 65, she loses 2 weeks of food. And a woman retiring at age 65 this year has a life expectancy of 20 years. That means at age 85, with this new device, the chained CPI, she would lose 16 weeks worth of her food budget. That's 16 weeks.

Everybody, as they get older, works through their savings and other means of support. And if you live too long, you're going to have a really hard time making ends meet. If we chain the CPI, it will get even harder for the next generation of seniors.

There's kind of a mixed message here. Republicans want to cut entitlements. They never supported Social Security and Medicare, but they just want to cut them to make sure they're there in the future. Well, If you chain the CPI, Social Security, which is supposed to have adequate benefits to pay full guaranteed benefits until 2033, would pick up 2 years. So we cut benefits for 100 percent of seniors retiring now and in the future, and Social Security would last 2 years longer. That doesn't exactly save Social Security, does it?

On the converse, with my plan, where we lift the cap so that people who earn a $1 million or $2 million or one of those hedge fund guys earning a billion dollars a year would pay Social Security tax on all of his or her income, we add 50 years to the life of Social Security. That's about as far as you can measure it into the future.

If they wanted to save Social Security, if that's what the White House is up to, if that's what the Republicans are up to, it's a much better way to do it without penalizing seniors. But that's not really what it's about. It's to take a program, Social Security, which is self-funding, doesn't draw on the general fund, doesn't create any deficit, it's to take money from Social Security and use it elsewhere to plug holes in our budget.

That's not right. It's the highest tax paid by many American workers to the Federal Government. Almost half of workers pay more in Social Security taxes, particularly the self-employed, than they do income taxes to the Federal Government. And if you earn over $112,000 a year, your tax rate goes down. If you get $1,200,000, your tax rate is one-tenth that of someone who earns $50,000 a year; $12 million, one one-hundredth; and those billionaires are paying less than 1 second's wages in Social Security taxes.

If you want to fix the program, lift the cap and make everybody pay the same percentage of their income into Social Security, but don't pretend by taking food out of the mouths of seniors in the future that you're fixing the problem for full funding of Social Security beyond 2033. You're not. That's a lie. Admit what you're doing. You want to cut benefits to seniors, to veterans and other working Americans with this chained CPI artifice.

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 13 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 (Mr. WENSTRUP) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God of the universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day. We thank You that You give us a share in Your creative work, having endowed each with unique and important talents.

On this day, we ask Your blessing on the men and women of the people's House who have been entrusted with the care of this great Nation's people. Because of the great blessings You have bestowed on our Nation, may we embrace the opportunity to build a better world beyond our borders as well.

May all that we do this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

WE NEED A FAIRER, SIMPLER TAX CODE

(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. Mr. Speaker, today is tax day. This year, millions of Americans spent more time than ever before preparing their taxes as a result of ObamaCare's 21 new tax increases, which added up to more than $1 trillion, destroying jobs.

The Tax Code is extremely complex, with over 4 million words, and is comprised of over 74,000 pages. House Republicans understand that we need to reform the Tax Code to make it more fair and simple.

Our budget proposal, the Path to Prosperity, not only repeals ObamaCare and the job-destroying taxes associated with it, it also reforms our Tax Code to encourage new jobs by small businesses. By simplifying our Tax Code, closing loopholes, and lowering rates, small businesses will be able to begin hiring again and increase wages for American workers.

The Presidential and Senate budget plans keep ObamaCare taxes in place and advocate for billions in new taxes. Raising taxes takes money from small businesses and destroys jobs.

I encourage the Senate and the President to begin working with House Republicans to clean up the Tax Code, rather than increasing regulations and taxes that will destroy jobs.

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

HONORING THE VICTIMS OF THE VIRGINIA TECH SHOOTING

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

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to remember the tragic shooting at Virginia Tech. Seven years ago tomorrow our country lost more than 30 lives, many of them college students with their entire future stretching out before them.

One of those students was Ross Alameddine, who lived in Saugus, which is in my district. He was loved by his family and friends, and is remembered by countless more. I've had the honor to talk with his mother, Lynnette Alameddine, and have seen, firsthand, how she has turned her sorrow into action, working to prevent other tragedies like the one that took her child, and to protect all of our children, our sons and daughters.

And she's not alone. In recent months we've seen the strength of moms and dads across the country. Americans were mobilized in joining together to demand action, to ensure that Congress passes responsible legislation to reduce gun violence.

In my district alone, some 500 people in the last few days have joined me online to demand action on commonsense legislation. Through my Web site, Facebook, and Twitter, hundreds of parents and grandparents and students have added their names to the hundreds of thousands of voices across the country calling on Speaker BOEHNER to bring legislation to the House floor to reduce gun violence.

We cannot let some in Congress block action. We all deserve a vote.

OUR TAX SYSTEM IS BROKEN

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

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this week, as hardworking Americans across the country submit their tax returns, we are all reminded of the heavy burden placed upon all taxpayers by our country's broken tax system.

Like a snowball rolling down a hill, the United States Tax Code has grown and bloated itself over time, resulting in an avalanche of overregulation coming down on the heads of American taxpayers.

There have been over 4,400 changes to the Tax Code in the last decade alone. That averages to more than one per day. Is it any surprise, then, that the United States boasts more tax preparers than we do police officers and firefighters combined?

We're facing a four-alarm tax emergency in this country, and the House Republicans have a plan to address it. We stand committed to fundamental, comprehensive tax reform that makes our Tax Code fairer and simpler for all Americans, a Tax Code that makes our corporations more competitive, that will stop the hemorrhaging of American jobs overseas and bring jobs back to our shores.

Tax reform would increase hardworking Americans' take-home pay so that they have more money to live on, instead of the government having more of their money to spend.

Mr. Speaker, that's what American taxpayers deserve.

CONGRATULATING HOPWOOD JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, the first school to offer secondary education in the Northern Mariana Islands was officially named Hopwood Junior-Senior High School, in honor of Admiral Herbert Gladstone Hopwood, commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet.

In 1969, when a senior high school opened, the name was shortened to Hopwood Junior High School. But the school itself expanded. It now has the second-largest student body of any Northern Marianas school, serving nearly 1,200 young scholars.

Facilities expanded to vocational education buildings; an alternative school, Lina'la Malawasch Academy; and a performing arts building.

Hopwood's motto is: ''We Make Every Day the Best.'' This upbeat attitude is reflected in a record of performance, including awards in regional forensic and theater competitions, spelling bees, and Academic Challenge Bowls.

From humble beginnings in 1949, to this day, Hopwood has served a vital role in the lives of our students and our communities. I have great confidence the school will continue to distinguish itself in the years to come.

Congratulations to the Hopwood Hilitais.

FLAWED IMMIGRATION PROPOSAL

(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, the Senate's immigration proposal contains a fatal flaw. It legalizes almost everyone in the country illegally, amnesty, before it secures the border.

As a result, the Senate proposal issues an open invitation to enter the country illegally. Millions more will do so before the border is secure. The Senate proposal would dramatically increase illegal immigration.

The non-partisan Government Accountability Office found that only 6 percent of the U.S.-Mexico border is under full control of the Border Patrol. And 40 percent of all illegal immigrants are visa overstayers. Yet, the Senate proposal legalizes almost everyone in the country before a system is set up to identify the visa overstayers.

The Senate proposal amounts to amnesty first, border security later, if ever. It is fatally flawed.

□ 1410

TAX REFORM II

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

Mr. WENSTRUP. It's that time of year again. Folks back in my district and all across America have had to part ways with our hard-earned money as we send our taxes off to Washington. How long did it take you just to figure out the complicated tax forms and get everything together just to file your returns? It takes the average American 13 hours. Not the best use of your time, is it? But, then, it's not hard to imagine when you consider that our Tax Code contains over 70,000 pages of regulations.

That's not the tax system that our fellow Americans deserve. We need a Tax Code that is fairer and simpler for everyone—families, students, business owners, and all hardworking taxpayers. That's the kind of comprehensive tax reform that the House Republicans want to enact.

TAXES AND THE BUDGET

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

Ms. FOXX. National taxpayer advocate Nina E. Olson lists ''complexity in the Tax Code'' as ''the number one most serious problem facing taxpayers.'' At about 4 million words in length, it's not hard to see why. Our Tax Code is four times wordier than the Bible, minus the grace and mercy. It's so complex and intimidating that 60 percent of Americans pay good money just to have someone else tell them how much the government is going to take from them. Families spend more on taxes today than on food, clothing, and housing combined.

We should be working to lighten that burden. A simpler, fairer Tax Code will help families save more and empower employers to pay their workers more and create new jobs. A Tax Code that doesn't require taxpayers to own a secret decoder ring or hire a legal team is the kind of reform we're working on in the House of Representatives. A commonsense Tax Code will make the difference in the lives of taxpayers, and that's what this Congress should strive toward.

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 12 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1701

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING) at 5 o'clock and 1 minute 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.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1162) to amend title 31, United States Code, to make improvements in the Government Accountability Office, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1162

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 ''Government Accountability Office Improvement Act''.

SEC. 2. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE IMPROVEMENT.

(a) AUTHORITY TO OBTAIN INFORMATION.—

(1) AUTHORITY TO OBTAIN RECORDS.—Section 716 of title 31, United States Code, is amended in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking ''(a)'' and inserting ''(2)''; and

(B) by inserting after the section heading the following:

''(a)(1) The Comptroller General is authorized to obtain such agency records as the Comptroller General requires to discharge his duties (including audit, evaluation, and investigative duties), including through the bringing of civil actions under this section. In reviewing a civil action under this section, the court shall recognize the continuing force and effect of the authorization in the preceding sentence until such time as the authorization is repealed pursuant to law.''.

(2) COPIES.—Section 716(a) of title 31, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), is further amended in the second sentence of paragraph (2) by striking ''inspect an agency record'' and inserting ''inspect, and make and retain copies of, an agency record''.

(b) ADMINISTERING OATHS.—Section 711 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following:

''(4) administer oaths to witnesses when auditing and settling accounts and, with the prior express approval of the Comptroller General, when investigating fraud or attempts to defraud the United States, or irregularity or misconduct of an employee or agent of the United States.''.

(c) ACCESS TO CERTAIN INFORMATION.—

(1) ACCESS TO CERTAIN INFORMATION.—Subchapter II of chapter 7 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 721. Access to certain information

''(a) No provision of the Social Security Act, including section 453(l) of that Act (42 U.S.C. 653(l)), shall be construed to limit, amend, or supersede the authority of the Comptroller General to obtain any information or to inspect or copy any record under section 716 of this title.

''(b) No provision of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, including section 301(j) of that Act (21 U.S.C. 331(j)), shall be construed to limit, amend, or supersede the authority of the Comptroller General to obtain any information or to inspect or copy any record under section 716 of this title.

''(c)(1) The Comptroller General shall prescribe such policies and procedures as are necessary to protect from public disclosure proprietary or trade secret information obtained consistent with this section.

''(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to—

''(A) alter or amend the prohibitions against the disclosure of trade secret or other sensitive information prohibited by section 1905 of title 18 and other applicable laws; or

''(B) affect the applicability of section 716(e) of this title, including the protections against unauthorized disclosure contained in that section, to information obtained consistent with this section.

''(d) Specific references to statutes in this section shall not be construed to affect access by the Government Accountability Office to information under statutes that are not so referenced.''.

(2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 7 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 720 the following:

''721. Access to certain information.''.

(d) AGENCY REPORTS.—Section 720(b) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ''or planned'' after ''action taken''; and

(2) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

''(1) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives, the congressional committees with jurisdiction over the agency program or activity that is the subject of the recommendation, and the Government Accountability Office before the 61st day after the date of the report; and''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ISSA. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

As you know, the Government Accountability Office is a legislative branch agency that investigates how the Federal Government spends taxpayer dollars. Often called the ''congressional watchdog,'' the GAO investigates instances of waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government. My committee has direct jurisdiction over the GAO.

Congress must have current information on how Federal programs are performing in order to both legislate and effectively conduct meaningful oversight.

H.R. 1162, the GAO Improvement Act, will enhance the GAO's ability to serve Congress primarily by ensuring the agency has access to key data warehoused in the executive branch.

This bill ensures that the GAO has access to the National Directory of New Hires, which is used to verify eligibility for Federal programs, to detect or prevent fraud, and to identify improper payments.

H.R. 1162 will ensure the GAO has the ability to obtain agency records and to administer oaths to witnesses when auditing accounts and investigating fraud.

It will allow the Comptroller General to seek judicial remedy to enforce GAO's right to information under the law.

GAO has an exemplary record of protecting sensitive government information, including national security documents. The committee is confident that GAO, a nonpartisan portion of the legislative branch, will continue to vigorously maintain confidentiality regarding information it obtains.

I want to note that the language in this bill was included in previous

versions of the DATA Act that was approved unanimously by the House in the last Congress.

I want to additionally thank the ranking member, Mr. CUMMINGS, for his partnership in this issue. No matter which of us holds the gavel, we together know that the information we base our decisions on, the information critical to the American people, has a balance of time that we must realize must be sooner and not later.

The ranking member and I absolutely support this bill in its current form because we know that fresh information is critically important if we're to make our decisions well timely.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I first just want to dedicate a moment or two to our fellow citizens up in Boston who are going through some very traumatic times right now. The fact that bombs have gone off in Boston, that sadly there have been fatalities and sadly many people have been injured, our prayers go out to our fellow citizens, to the first responders, and we pray that this matter will be resolved in a way that brings anybody who brings harm to anyone to justice.

With that, Mr. Speaker, on the subject of the bill, I rise in strong support of this bill.

I want to associate myself with the words of our chairman, Mr. ISSA. This is truly indeed a bipartisan bill. As to the contents of the bill, GAO assists Congress in identifying waste, fraud, and abuse in Federal programs and recommending ways to make government work better.

Because of its vital role, GAO needs unfetterred access to Federal agencies. Efforts by executive branch officials to withhold information from GAO unfortunately impede Congress' ability to legislate effectively. And I will say it over and over again, as long as I live, we need to be effective and efficient in everything we do on this Earth. This is an effort to make sure that we can be just that, more effective and efficient.

The Government Accountability Office Improvement Act will increase the effectiveness of GAO by clarifying and strengthening its authority in several critical areas, including access to records.

The GAO Improvement Act addresses a Federal court decision in Walker v. Cheney that limited GAO's ability to question agency access determinations in court.

The bill provides the Comptroller General, with express authority from Congress, to pursue litigation if the Comptroller General determines that the performance of her official duties is harmed when an agency improperly withholds information.

The bill also clarifies GAO's access to information in other key areas by confirming GAO's right to make and retain copies of records, authorizing the GAO to administer oaths in certain circumstances and specifically granting GAO access to certain information.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the bill creates a reporting mechanism so that Congress will be more fully informed when agencies do not cooperate with GAO.

I introduced similar legislation to this bill in the last Congress which passed the House as a provision of H.R. 2146, the DATA Act, to which it was added at my request.

Again, I want to thank the chairman of the committee for his cooperation in getting the bill to the floor, and I urge Members to pass H.R. 1162.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I now will place in the record a letter from the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee supporting the bill, but recognizing that the primary jurisdiction over this database belongs to the Ways and Means Committee, and we are responding in the affirmative for that.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 15, 2013.

Hon. DARRELL ISSA,
Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ISSA, On March 20, 2013, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform reported H.R. 1162, the Government Accountability Office Improvement Act, favorably to the House. Section 2, dealing with authority to access the National Directory of New Hires in Section 453 of the Social Security Act, touches the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee concerning the provision of the bill that falls within our Rule X jurisdiction, I agree not to seek a sequential referral so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that, by forgoing consideration of H.R. 1162 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration thereof.

Sincerely,

DAVE CAMP,
Chairman.

Before I recognize the next speaker, I would ask that the House take a moment to recognize the loss of life in Boston as this tragedy continues to unfold.

□ 1710

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, we have no further requests for time, and I am prepared to close unless there are further speakers on the other side.

Mr. CUMMINGS. We have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Then I think we both ask for favorable consideration, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1162, as amended.

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. ISSA. 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.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER VACANCY ACT

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1246) to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to provide that the District of Columbia Treasurer or one of the Deputy Chief Financial Officers of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer of the District of Columbia may perform the functions and duties of the Office in an acting capacity if there is a vacancy in the Office.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1246

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 ''District of Columbia Chief Financial Officer Vacancy Act''.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZING DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TREASURER OR DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER OF OFFICE OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA TO SERVE AS ACTING CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER IN EVENT OF VACANCY IN OFFICE.

(a) AUTHORIZING SERVICE IN ACTING CAPACITY IN EVENT OF VACANCY IN OFFICE.—Section 424(b) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act (sec. 1–204.24(b), D.C. Official Code) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) AUTHORIZING TREASURER OR DEPUTY CFO TO PERFORM DUTIES IN ACTING CAPACITY IN EVENT OF VACANCY IN OFFICE.—

''(A) SERVICE AS CFO.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), if there is a vacancy in the Office of Chief Financial Officer because the Chief Financial Officer has died, resigned, or is otherwise unable to perform the functions and duties of the Office—

''(I) the District of Columbia Treasurer shall serve as the Chief Financial Officer in an acting capacity, subject to the time limitation of subparagraph (B); or

''(II) the Mayor may direct one of the Deputy Chief Financial Officers of the Office referred to in subparagraphs (A) through (D) of subsection (a)(3) to serve as the Chief Financial Officer in an acting capacity, subject to the time limitation of subparagraph (B).

''(ii) EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.—Notwithstanding clause (i), an individual may not serve as the Chief Financial Officer under such clause if the individual did not serve as the District of Columbia Treasurer or as one of such Deputy Chief Financial Officers of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (as the case may be) for at least 90 days during the 1-year period which ends on the date the vacancy occurs.

''(B) TIME LIMITATION.—A vacancy in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer may not be filled by the service of any individual in an acting capacity under subparagraph (A) after the expiration of the 210-day period which begins on the date the vacancy occurs.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 424(b)(2)(D) of such Act (sec. 1–204.24(b)(2)(D), D.C. Official Code) is amended by striking ''Any vacancy'' and inserting ''Subject to paragraph (3), any vacancy''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this Act shall apply with respect to vacancies occurring on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

As chairman of the committee with oversight and responsibility over the District of Columbia, from time to time it comes to our attention that the Home Rule Act and other legislation that has governed the Federal City needs to be updated. In this case, because of the work of Delegate HOLMES NORTON, we became aware of a potentially dangerous flaw within existing law.

On February 1, Dr. Gandhi, the longstanding District of Columbia chief financial officer, announced that he will retire on June 1. Subsequently, Ms. NORTON and the Mayor both began to realize that, if they did not have a full-time and confirmed replacement by June 1, they would be without the authority to write checks; they would be without a requirement that makes the city physically work. This has been a flaw for a very long time. No city, no State, no government should have a single individual critical to the disbursement and consideration of their just debts; but that is, in fact, the way the law was written.

This bill very narrowly but essentially—and, if I may say, it's long overdue—recognizes that there has to be a succession plan, a capability to fill vacancies. H.R. 1246 parallels the Federal Vacancies Reform Act and simply reaffirms a logical sequence of who may be considered to fill this vacancy for whatever period of time would be reasonable. Under our legislation, we recognize that we also mirror the Federal statute for what is, in fact, a temporary filling.

I want to just close by thanking Delegate HOLMES NORTON. She brought this to us, realizing how critical it could be, and was the first to realize that, if Dr. Gandhi had simply had a car accident and had become infirmed, the same exact situation could have happened and could have been a crisis during an August recess or some other period of time in which Congress would have found itself unable to resolve it in a timely fashion. So I want to thank her for recognizing the potential before all others, and perhaps that's the best justification for having a Delegate represent the District of Columbia as she has so well.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I begin by thanking the chairman, Chairman ISSA and, of course, Ranking Member CUMMINGS for so quickly understanding the importance of bringing this bill to the floor and for marking it up expeditiously. We brought it to the chairman and the ranking member after they had completed the list for the markup, and they immediately recognized how important this bill was.

May I also take this moment to thank Chairman ISSA for his continued partnership on legislation to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the District of Columbia, including budget autonomy, which got a boost this week when President Obama included a legislative provision—that's the first time any President has ever included legislative language—to grant D.C. budget autonomy in his budget.

This legislation is a whole lot more straightforward but is highly technical and could have been overlooked. The District of Columbia Chief Financial Officer Vacancy Act is, however, an important example of Chairman ISSA's commitment to assist the District of Columbia in improving and safeguarding its vital operations.

The bill, based on the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, is intended to clarify the authority of the Mayor of the District of Columbia to fill a vacancy in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer on an interim basis. Under the bill, if there is a vacancy in the Office of the CFO because the CFO has died or resigned or has otherwise become unable to perform the functions and duties of the office, under this bill, patterned after Federal legislation, the D.C. treasurer becomes the acting CFO unless the Mayor appoints a deputy CFO to serve as the acting CFO. In either case, there may not be an acting CFO for more than 210 days.

The CFO, an independent official created by Congress, oversees all of the financial operations of the District of Columbia. The city may not obligate or expend funds without the CFO's approval. Congress, apparently unintentionally, created uncertainty regarding the Mayor's authority to appoint an interim CFO in the fiscal 2001 District of Columbia Appropriations Act, which added a 30-day congressional review and comment period before the appointment of a CFO takes effect.

Now, when we passed the original bill, there was not that comment period, and here is where we got the technical flaw and Congress retained this congressional review and comment period in its rewrite of the CFO statute in the 2005 District of Columbia Omnibus Authorization Act. In the event of a vacancy, this review and comment period could leave the District without a CFO for at least 30 days.

While it could be argued that the Mayor has the general authority to execute the laws and to administer the affairs of the District of Columbia, which may give the Mayor implicit authority to fill a vacancy in the Office of the CFO on an interim basis, this office, after all, was created by the Congress. It would not be prudent to leave doubt about the Mayor's authority as to the only officer who can authorize spending for the District of Columbia. The bill removes any possible doubt.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to join with my colleague, Ms. NORTON, in her comments just a moment ago.

□ 1720

The President recognizes that now is the time to work on a bipartisan basis on budget autonomy for the District, recognizing that every year contracts have to be let for teachers who will go to work in late August and early September, but in fact they often do not know what their budget is going to be on October 1. So this is another area where I think Ms. NORTON and I find ourselves prepared to bring legislation in a timely fashion that deals with the need to make sure that the taxes raised within the District of Columbia by the people of the District of Columbia can in fact be put toward those essential, important services that are paid for by the taxes of the people of the District.

So although that isn't directly related to today's legislation, I think it's critical that we as the ultimate stewards of the Federal city recognize that we cannot run the Federal city, we cannot budget the Federal city, we cannot in fact do what mayors and city councils do as well as they do. So although I share with my colleagues that it is a responsibility the Constitution gives us, I join with my colleague, Ms. NORTON, in saying that we will live up to the President's request in the budget; we will offer legislation from our committee in the next month or so, so that long before the passage of appropriations we once again have a piece of

legislation before this committee that deals with a long overdue reform to the Home Rule Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. May I thank the chairman for his remarks concerning budget autonomy. Many in the District see budget autonomy as simply a right because it is a local budget; and, of course, the Congress had nothing to do with raising the funds in that budget.

The chairman had a hearing where he listened to the ramifications and effects of bringing a local budget to a body that, even in the best of times, is surrounded by great uncertainty; and he heard the experience of the penalties that the District incurs in its bond rating which otherwise would be perhaps the best in the country because the District has such a large reserve, unusual in these times. And he heard about our budget year, which is timed to begin with the congressional budget year; whereas, every other jurisdiction in the United States begins its fiscal year in July timed to their own children and the opening of school. And he heard about the difficulties of running a large city government and of the shutdown preparations we've had to make because our budget is tied to the federal budget.

The District of Columbia did not lobby the chairman. He is an astute observer, not only of the District of Columbia, but of how money is managed, and he himself came forward with the notion that the local budget ought to be with local residents. It seems to me to be a particularly thoughtful proposal when you consider that Congress, in bills and various provisions that have been offered, still would have the final authority over the budget. Here we have a situation where Congress would lose nothing, but the District would gain what we would in the District would call almost everything.

With that, I'm pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the ranking member who has been so helpful to me on this and other matters.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all say to Ms. NORTON, I want to thank you for your vigilance and thank you for staying on the case. No matter how history will be written about the District of Columbia, it must be said that you have, over and over again, stood up for the District, trying to make sure that it has the autonomy that it deserves, which is simply right, and we thank you very much for those efforts.

As ranking member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, I rise in strong support of this important legislation. The District of Columbia Chief Financial Officer Vacancy Act would give the D.C. Mayor the express authority to appoint an acting chief financial officer in the event of a vacancy in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, an independent office created by Congress and responsible for the financial operations of the District.

While the Mayor, as the official responsible for executing the laws of the District, may have implied authority under current law to appoint an acting chief financial officer, this bill erases any doubt about the Mayor's authority to appoint an acting CFO.

That is so very important. The District's strong credit rating is attributable in no small part to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, and it is important that there be no confusion about the office's ability to expend funds.

Finally let me say this. I agree with the gentlelady, with her comments, with regard to her comments with regard to the chairman of the committee. He has shown strong support for this autonomy that she is talking about, the autonomy that the residents of the District of Columbia richly deserve; and hopefully we will be able to move this ball forward so that when we look at the end of our tenure, if not before, we will be able to say that we were able to accomplish it and get it done.

So I applaud the chairman for his foresight. I definitely support him in his efforts with regard to that issue. And to this issue, by the way, because this issue here that we are dealing with today, clearly, we had a situation where there was a hole that needed to be closed so that there would be clarity. And through your foresight, Ms. NORTON, and certainly the foresight of the D.C. Government, we now are able to close that so there is no ambiguity whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and thank the gentlelady for yielding to me.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, but I do want to thank the ranking member for his very vigorous and important remarks on this bill, and for his great assistance to me on this bill and on budget autonomy and many other issues.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to join with me in support of H.R. 1246. This bill under consideration is critical and timely.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1246.

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.

CONTRACTING AND TAX ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2013

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 882) to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 882

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 ''Contracting and Tax Accountability Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. GOVERNMENTAL POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States Government that no Government contracts or grants should be awarded to individuals or companies with seriously delinquent Federal tax debts.

SEC. 3. DISCLOSURE AND EVALUATION OF CONTRACT OFFERS FROM DELINQUENT FEDERAL DEBTORS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The head of any executive agency that issues an invitation for bids or a request for proposals for a contract in an amount greater than the simplified acquisition threshold shall require each person that submits a bid or proposal to submit with the bid or proposal a form—

(1) certifying that the person does not have a seriously delinquent tax debt; and

(2) authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to disclose to the head of the agency information limited to describing whether the person has a seriously delinquent tax debt.

(b) IMPACT ON RESPONSIBILITY DETERMINATION.—The head of any executive agency, in evaluating any offer received in response to a solicitation issued by the agency for bids or proposals for a contract, shall consider a certification that the offeror has a seriously delinquent tax debt to be definitive proof that the offeror is not a responsible source as defined in section 113 of title 41, United States Code.

(c) DEBARMENT.—

(1) REQUIREMENT.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the head of an executive agency shall initiate a suspension or debarment proceeding against a person after receiving an offer for a contract from such person if—

(A) such offer contains a certification (as required under subsection (a)(1)) that such person has a seriously delinquent tax debt; or

(B) the head of the agency receives information from the Secretary of the Treasury (as authorized under subsection (a)(2)) demonstrating that such a certification submitted by such person is false.

(2) WAIVER.—The head of an executive agency may waive paragraph (1) with respect to a person based upon a written finding of urgent and compelling circumstances significantly affecting the interests of the United States. If the head of an executive agency waives paragraph (1) for a person, the head of the agency shall submit to Congress, within 30 days after the waiver is made, a report containing the rationale for the waiver and relevant information supporting the waiver decision.

(d) RELEASE OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall make available to all executive agencies a standard form for the authorization described in subsection (a).

(e) REVISION OF REGULATIONS.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Federal Acquisition Regulation shall be revised to incorporate the requirements of this section.

SEC. 4. DISCLOSURE AND EVALUATION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS FROM DELINQUENT FEDERAL DEBTORS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The head of any executive agency that offers a grant in excess of an amount equal to the simplified acquisition threshold shall require each person applying for a grant to submit with the grant application a form—

(1) certifying that the person does not have a seriously delinquent tax debt; and

(2) authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to disclose to the head of the executive agency information limited to describing whether the person has a seriously delinquent tax debt.

(b) IMPACT ON DETERMINATION OF FINANCIAL STABILITY.—The head of any executive agency, in evaluating any application for a grant offered by the agency, shall consider a certification that the grant applicant has a seriously delinquent tax debt to be definitive proof that the applicant is high-risk and, if the applicant is awarded the grant, shall take appropriate measures under guidelines issued by the Office of Management and Budget for enhanced oversight of high-risk grantees.

(c) DEBARMENT.—

(1) REQUIREMENT.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the head of an executive agency shall initiate a suspension or debarment proceeding against a person after receiving a grant application from such person if—

(A) such application contains a certification (as required under subsection (a)(1)) that such person has a seriously delinquent tax debt; or

(B) the head of the agency receives information from the Secretary of the Treasury (as authorized under subsection (a)(2)) demonstrating that such a certification submitted by such person is false.

(2) WAIVER.—The head of an executive agency may waive paragraph (1) with respect to a person based upon a written finding of urgent and compelling circumstances significantly affecting the interests of the United States. If the head of an executive agency waives paragraph (1) for a person, the head of the agency shall submit to Congress, within 30 days after the waiver is made, a report containing the rationale for the waiver and relevant information supporting the waiver decision.

(d) RELEASE OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall make available to all executive agencies a standard form for the authorization described in subsection (a).

(e) REVISION OF REGULATIONS.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall revise such regulations as necessary to incorporate the requirements of this section.

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL RULES.

For purposes of this Act:

(1) PERSON.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''person'' includes—

(i) an individual;

(ii) a partnership; and

(iii) a corporation.

(B) EXCLUSION.—The term ''person'' does not include an individual seeking assistance through a grant entitlement program.

(C) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN PARTNERSHIPS.—A partnership shall be treated as a person with a seriously delinquent tax debt if such partnership has a partner who—

(i) holds an ownership interest of 50 percent or more in that partnership; and

(ii) has a seriously delinquent tax debt.

(D) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN CORPORATIONS.—A corporation shall be treated as a person with a seriously delinquent tax debt if such corporation has an officer or a shareholder who—

(i) holds 50 percent or more, or a controlling interest that is less than 50 percent, of the outstanding shares of corporate stock in that corporation; and

(ii) has a seriously delinquent tax debt.

(2) EXECUTIVE AGENCY.—The term ''executive agency'' has the meaning given such term in section 133 of title 41, United States Code.

(3) SERIOUSLY DELINQUENT TAX DEBT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''seriously delinquent tax debt'' means an outstanding Federal debt under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for which a notice of lien has been filed in public records pursuant to section 6323 of such Code.

(B) EXCEPTIONS.—Such term does not include—

(i) a debt that is being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement under section 6159 or section 7122 of such Code; and

(ii) a debt with respect to which a collection due process hearing under section 6330 of such Code, or relief under subsection (a), (b), or (f) of section 6015 of such Code, is requested or pending.

SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall apply with respect to contracts and grants awarded on or after the date occurring 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1730

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

H.R. 882, the Contracting and Tax Accountability Act of 2013, is, in fact, a broadly bipartisan bill introduced by Mr. CHAFFETZ of Utah and Ms. SPEIER of California. They recognize that, in fact, contractors and, in a companion bill, individual Federal employees have a high standard, a high responsibility, and one of the least of those responsibilities is to pay their taxes in a timely fashion.

Sadly, we discover that, on occasions, we find ourselves with contractors who have not met that responsibility. Most often, those contractors, by not meeting that responsibility, may have, in fact, not deposited the withholding of the very workers who are working on our behalf.

This kind of irresponsible behavior, although not always found, is found often enough that GSA contractors are estimated to owe over $3 billion in taxes that are in arrears, and nearly $1.4 billion seriously in arrears.

The bill makes tax compliance both a prerequisite for receiving a contract or being an agent and, in fact, recognizes that those who do not make good on their taxes may, in fact, be seen as eligible for potential suspension or debarment.

Federal contractors, for the most part, do comply and they do comply very well. But I believe that what Ms. SPEIER and Chairman CHAFFETZ have done is recognize that we must have zero tolerance for people who, even after being recognized, and who are seriously behind and delinquent, continue to resist paying their just taxes.

Again, often these taxes have nothing to do with a debate about income tax but, rather, withholding that simply wasn't done. These kinds of contractors are, by definition, the ones also likely to not live up to the high standard that the taxpayers expect by our contractors.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to, first of all, thank Congressman CHAFFETZ and Congresswoman SPEIER for introducing this very, very important piece of legislation. And I rise in strong support of H.R. 882, the Contracting and Tax Accountability Act.

This bill is very similar to legislation passed by the House in the 110th Congress, and I supported it then, and I surely support it now. The bill enjoys bipartisan support. It is noncontroversial. Last month it was considered by the Oversight Committee and passed unanimously.

GAO has reported that government contractors owed more than $5 billion in unpaid Federal taxes in 2004 and 2005. Unpaid tax, taxes owed by contractors, included payroll taxes as well as corporate income taxes.

GAO has also found that some contractors with unpaid tax debts are repeat offenders that have failed to pay their taxes over many years, including, in one case, for almost 20 years.

H.R. 882 would allow the Federal Government to ensure that contractors seeking to do business with the Federal Government have paid their taxes before they can receive a Federal contract.

The Federal Acquisition Regulation was revised in 2008 to require contractors to certify that they do not owe a delinquent tax debt to the Federal Government. The bill builds on that requirement by providing Federal agencies the means to verify contractors' claims.

The legislation will also ensure that responsible contractors no longer have to compete with tax delinquents.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation in order to preserve the fairness in the contracting process.

I also take a moment to salute our chairman, Mr. ISSA, for making sure that this bill reached the floor. And so with that, we will now be able to address some of these deadbeat contractors.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, it's now my honor to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ), the author of this bill, a champion for accountability of the Federal workforce and Federal contractors.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ISSA for his unyielding support in pursuit of good government. And I thank him for his support of this piece of legislation moved forward.

I also thank Ranking Member CUMMINGS, in working with him and his staff, and certainly with Representative SPEIER, who also shares his passion of making sure that contractors are held responsible for their actions.

Mr. Speaker, today, tens of millions of individuals and corporations all across America will file their Federal tax returns and pay back any money they owe the Federal Government.

However, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there will be some who fail to meet this obligation and simply refuse to pay the taxes they owe.

This legislation, H.R. 882, the Contracting and Tax Accountability Act, has a very simple purpose: to prohibit companies with serious delinquent Federal tax debts from doing business with the Federal Government and receiving new Federal contracts. Since Federal contractors draw compensation and funding from taxpayer dollars, we must ensure that they are complying with existing laws and paying their own taxes.

Mr. Speaker, just last month this legislation passed through the Oversight and Government Reform Committee by voice vote, and it is identical to legislation that also unanimously passed the committee last Congress.

Going back a little further, Mr. Speaker, in both the 110th and the 111th Congress, former Congressman Brad Ellsworth of Indiana introduced very similar versions of this bill. And in the 110th Congress, the legislation passed the House again by voice vote.

It begs the question what's happening over there in the United States Senate, but we will continue to pursue this to make sure this legislation passes.

Also back in the 110th Congress, then-Senator Barack Obama sponsored the Senate companion, Contractor and Tax Accountability Act, to Congressman Ellsworth's legislation but, unfortunately, the legislation did not progress in either Chamber then.

As President, Mr. Obama has continued to fight for the contractors to be held accountable. I concur with the President on this issue. This is bipartisan.

We're going to lead and spearhead this effort here in the House of Representatives and make sure that it becomes law, but the United States Senate is going to actually have to step up and do something at some point in life, Mr. Speaker.

This is a good piece of legislation. H.R. 882 establishes the process through which persons with serious delinquent Federal tax debts may be prohibited from receiving Federal contracts and grants. The legislation is designed to mandate that tax compliance be a prerequisite for receiving a Federal contract or a grant.

As the chairman knows, the Federal Acquisition Regulation, known as the FAR, was revised in 2008 to require contractors to certify they do not have delinquent tax debt to the Federal Government. Under the FAR revision, if a contractor is delinquent, then the standard Government-wide suspension and debarment process occurs in order to hold the contractor accountable.

H.R. 882 would, in essence, codify that regulation and provide a means to verify the contractor's certification. The legislation also provides broad exceptions for debts being paid in a timely manner, and debts to which a due process hearing has been requested or is pending.

Like the Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act, to be considered next, this legislation is meant to affect those thumbing their nose at Uncle Sam and the United States of America.

The Government Accountability Office, the GAO, has reported that government contractors owe over $5 billion in unpaid Federal taxes. Many of the contractors have repeatedly failed to fulfill their tax obligations and have delinquencies that have extended over multiple tax periods.

GAO even identified instances in which companies that are delinquent in their taxes have won contracts by submitting lower offers than companies that comply with their tax obligations, giving them an undue advantage.

Those who consciously ignore the channels in place to fulfill their tax obligations must be held accountable, and they must play on the same even playing field. This legislation will do just that.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this commonsense, bipartisan piece of legislation. I again thank Chairman ISSA for his support, as well as Ranking Member CUMMINGS.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER), the cosponsor of this legislation.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member for allotting me some time to speak on this bill, and to our chairman, Mr. ISSA, for moving this bill forward, and to my colleague, Mr. CHAFFETZ from Utah, who is the author of this measure.

Imagine what our constituents are thinking right now. Imagine if they really knew that while they're scurrying around trying to get their tax returns filed on time and making sure they have adequate funds in their accounts to write out that check, that there are corporations in this country that continue to get contracts from the United States of America, even though they don't pay their taxes.

So this bill will ensure that taxpayer dollars due today only go to responsible contractors who do not have significant debts to the Federal Government. This bill will make it clear to all contracting officials: no more tax money for deadbeat contractors.

□ 1740

As it stands, delinquent contractors are not only eligible for future contracts, but they actually get them. With one of the largest budgets in the Federal Government, the Defense Department already has a reputation for letting contractors fleece taxpayers. And to underscore this point, when the Defense Department needed a new PR contractor, they settled on a company that still owed $4 million in taxes. How can we allow that to happen?

Another company that owed the Federal Government a million dollars in taxes was paid an additional million dollars as a contractor from the Department of Defense. Instead of using the money to pay back the government, what did he do with the money? He bought a boat, some cars, and a home overseas.

Even the IRS, the agency responsible for collecting our taxes, has fallen down on the job of making sure that our taxpayer dollars only go to contractors who have paid them. The Inspector General found the IRS gave 11 companies $356 million in contracts despite owing millions of dollars themselves.

So the question is, Why would we reward scofflaws?

Let's get this done this year. And I would suggest to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle if in fact the Senate is the logjam, if that's what is going to prevent this from taking effect, let's co-write a letter to the President of the United States and ask him under his powers of executive order to take the steps necessary to put this in place so that we don't continue to have contractors who do not pay their taxes getting rewarded with contracts by the Federal Government.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, at this time I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 14½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlelady from Washington, D.C. (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to thank Mr. CHAFFETZ and Mr. ISSA for this bill.

Initially, there was a bill involving only Federal employees. And we had a concern that often when bills come forward for Federal employees, they are not bills that recognize the substantial funds that contractors receive. And Chairman ISSA and Chairman CHAFFETZ looked closely at it and now have come forward with a contractor's bill as well.

I do want to say in light of the fact that I'm going to oppose the next bill—

and I do believe there's a difference between employees and contractors, and I don't want to get into that right at this moment—I do want to say that for Federal employees undergoing a pay freeze and furloughs, there's one thing Uncle Sam can do that apparently hasn't been done with many contractors. He can garnish wages. And you can bet your bottom dollar if there's a Federal employee that owes taxes and you can prove that money is owed to the Federal Government, his pay will be garnished.

But as we heard the gentlelady from California say, these contractors continue to receive the largesse—I guess that's how they regard it—of the Federal Government. It certainly can be distinguished in that way. But I do believe that the chairman of the full committee and the subcommittee deserve credit for, in fact, moving at least where they saw that there should be some equity, that contractors would be treated similarly to Federal employees.

Mr. ISSA. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Having no further requests for time, Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to vote in favor of this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I made a decision to bring these two bills separately, rather than combine them, for a reason. This is not controversial, but failed to get through the Senate. The other bill has some controversy. But I'd like to say that in fact I believe that both bills would tell the American people—both the one related to contractors and the next one we'll be considering related to Federal employees—that we hold ourselves to the standard that the American people, the American taxpayer, expects us to.

So although I know that Ms. NORTON does not support the next bill, but with the kind of vigor and optimism and positive discussion that we've heard on the previous two bills and on this, I would say that the important thing for all of us to understand is the money here is significant; but the principle of holding our contractors, and in the next bill ourselves, responsible to a high level of integrity and not having those continue without us taking note of it, I think offers the same statement to the American people at a time of sequestration, at a time in which we're questioning how much we can afford from our government.

For that reason, I want these bills to be considered separately. I intend to vote for both of them. I believe both of them have merit for the same reason; but I do thank my colleagues on the other side because this bill, I believe, is truly without controversy and would be without controversy. I ask all of those here to note that we, on a unanimous basis, support H.R. 882. I ask its support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 882, as amended.

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. ISSA. 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.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE TAX ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2013

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 249) to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that persons having seriously delinquent tax debts shall be ineligible for Federal employment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 249

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 ''Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. INELIGIBILITY OF PERSONS HAVING SERIOUSLY DELINQUENT TAX DEBTS FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 73 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SUBCHAPTER VIII—INELIGIBILITY OF PERSONS HAVING SERIOUSLY DELINQUENT TAX DEBTS FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

''§ 7381. Definitions

''For purposes of this subchapter—

''(1) the term 'seriously delinquent tax debt' means an outstanding debt under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for which a notice of lien has been filed in public records pursuant to section 6323 of such Code, except that such term does not include—

''(A) a debt that is being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement under section 6159 or section 7122 of such Code;

''(B) a debt with respect to which a collection due process hearing under section 6330 of such Code, or relief under subsection (a), (b), or (f) of section 6015 of such Code, is requested or pending;

''(C) a debt with respect to which a levy has been issued under section 6331 of such Code (or, in the case of an applicant for employment, a debt with respect to which the applicant agrees to be subject to a levy issued under such section); and

''(D) a debt with respect to which relief under section 6343(a)(1)(D) of such Code is granted;

''(2) the term 'employee' means an employee in or under an agency, including an individual described in sections 2104(b) and 2105(e); and

''(3) the term 'agency' means—

''(A) an Executive agency;

''(B) the United States Postal Service;

''(C) the Postal Regulatory Commission; and

''(D) an employing authority in the legislative branch.

''§ 7382. Ineligibility for employment

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (c), any person who has a seriously delinquent tax debt shall be ineligible to be appointed or to continue serving as an employee.

''(b) DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT.—The head of each agency shall take appropriate measures to ensure that each person applying for employment with such agency shall be required to submit (as part of the application for employment) certification that such person does not have any seriously delinquent tax debt.

''(c) REGULATIONS.—The Office of Personnel Management, in consultation with the Internal Revenue Service, shall, for purposes of carrying out this section with respect to the executive branch, promulgate any regulations which the Office considers necessary, except that such regulations shall provide for the following:

''(1) All due process rights, afforded by chapter 75 and any other provision of law, shall apply with respect to a determination under this section that an applicant is ineligible to be appointed or that an employee is ineligible to continue serving.

''(2) Before any such determination is given effect with respect to an individual, the individual shall be afforded 180 days to demonstrate that such individual's debt is one described in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), or (D) of section 7381(a)(1).

''(3) An employee may continue to serve, in a situation involving financial hardship, if the continued service of such employee is in the best interests of the United States, as determined on a case-by-case basis.

''(d) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—The Director of the Office of Personnel Management shall report annually to Congress on the number of exemptions made pursuant to subsection (c)(3).

''§ 7383. Review of public records

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Each agency shall provide for such reviews of public records as the head of such agency considers appropriate to determine if a notice of lien (as described in section 7381(1)) has been filed with respect to an employee of or an applicant for employment with such agency.

''(b) ADDITIONAL REQUESTS.—If a notice of lien is discovered under subsection (a) with respect to an employee or applicant for employment, the agency may—

''(1) request that the employee or applicant execute and submit a form authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to disclose to the head of the agency information limited to describing whether the employee or applicant has a seriously delinquent tax debt; and

''(2) contact the Secretary of the Treasury to request tax information limited to describing whether the employee or applicant has a seriously delinquent tax debt.

''(c) AUTHORIZATION FORM.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall make available to all agencies a standard form for the authorization described in subsection (b)(1).

''(d) NEGATIVE CONSIDERATION.—The head of an agency, in considering an individual's application for employment or in making an employee appraisal or evaluation, shall give negative consideration to a refusal or failure to comply with a request under subsection (b)(1).

''§ 7384. Confidentiality

''Neither the head nor any other employee of an agency may—

''(1) use any information furnished under the provisions of this subchapter for any purpose other than the administration of this subchapter;

''(2) make any publication whereby the information furnished by or with respect to

any particular individual under this subchapter can be identified; or

''(3) permit anyone who is not an employee of such agency to examine or otherwise have access to any such information.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 73 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SUBCHAPTER VIII—INELIGIBILITY OF PERSONS HAVING SERIOUSLY DELINQUENT TAX DEBTS FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

''7381. Definitions.
''7382. Ineligibility for employment.
''7383. Review of public records.
''7384. Confidentiality.''.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect 9 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to commend Mr. CHAFFETZ. Like the last piece of legislation, Mr. CHAFFETZ reintroduces a bill that passed overwhelmingly in the last Congress but was not taken up by the Senate. As Mr. CHAFFETZ said, it is in fact time for the Senate to at least give us an up-or-down vote on this legislation. By bringing it early in the Congress and, I believe, all these bills on a bipartisan basis, we make it clear that we want to hold ourselves to the standard that the taxpayers believe we should.

All Federal employees are currently held for paying their taxes by the code of ethics of the executive branch. So how can someone who, by the code of ethics, in fact not have satisfied in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all financial obligations, especially those to the Federal, State, and local taxes that are imposed by law, how can somebody who in fact hasn't done it and has reached a point of garnishment, reached a point at which they are unwilling to pay their just taxes, have no appeals or any pending, how can they in fact continue to expect to be Federal employees? The truth is these employees have given up any question about their ethics by avoiding it.

Before going further, I would like to have the Speaker take note that in fact for us, as Federal employees, our withholding is already taken out of our taxes. So to become seriously in arrears in our taxes, for the most part, has to do with activities outside our role. We're well insured for health care. Our taxes have already been withheld. So although there are occasions in which a taxpayer may find themselves seriously in arrears for some reason otherwise, this bill intends and has carefully crafted every possible exception so they could continue to work if, in fact, reasonable measures have been taken by the employee. In fact, if an employee simply agrees to be garnished for past taxes, pursuant to the law, they in fact can continue to work.

So I'd like to preface by saying this bill has passed before and has been well thought out. We in fact sent a letter to IRS asking them for a timely response. And to my dismay, they were not interested enough to respond to us by the deadline. Of course, the deadline for responding really was in the last Congress.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1750

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

As one who represents many Federal employees, with the Social Security Administration smack dab in the middle of my district, with many of my constituents getting up at 4 o'clock in the morning, catching the train over here from Howard County and Baltimore County to work for the Federal Government, a group of people, many of whom are being subjected now to furloughs, have been subjected to pay freezes, in some instances have been placed in a position where they have to pay more toward their pensions and get less, a group of people who in many instances I run into them at the gas station, at the Pancake House, or wherever I may see them, who are very much concerned about a word that has become a significant word in this House, ''uncertainty.'' I strongly oppose H.R. 249, a measure that would require the Federal Government to fire—to fire—Federal employees who have an outstanding tax debt. The legislation is unwarranted, unnecessary and, in fact, counterproductive.

I believe that Federal employees, like all Americans, should pay their taxes, and I don't think that there's one single Member of this Congress that feels otherwise. We all believe that Federal employees and all folks who owe taxes ought to pay them. Federal workers hold the public trust and should be held to a high standard of conduct. The fact is that Federal employees have met and exceeded that standard.

The legislation is unwarranted because the tax delinquency rate for Federal employees is less than half that of the general public. In 2011, the tax delinquency rate for the general public was 8.2 percent. In the same year, the tax delinquency rate for Federal workers was only 3.62 percent. Now, let me make it clear: I would suggest that it would be best—and wonderful—if that percentage was zero, but it's not. But again, the general delinquency rate, 8.2 percent; Federal workers, 3.62 percent.

The legislation is unnecessary because the IRS and other executive agencies already have procedures in place to recover back taxes from Federal employees. Through the Federal Payment and Levy Program, the IRS can impose a continuous levy on Federal salaries and annuities up to 15 percent until the debt is paid. Agencies also have the authority to take disciplinary action against employees for delinquent tax debts, which may include removal, if necessary.

The legislation is counterproductive because it would make it more difficult to collect unpaid taxes from Federal employees by requiring their termination and eliminating the ability to impose levies on their salaries.

On another note, I just left, about 3 hours ago, a job fair that I sponsored in my district where 9,000 unemployed people showed up. In talking to some of the various agencies, they said, Congressman CUMMINGS, we're glad that the State of Maryland is now dealing with child support issues a little bit differently because we used to take everybody's license. We would make it almost impossible for them to make money so that they could pay the child support. They said now we're beginning to turn some of those laws around because, again, we want to be effective and efficient in collecting the money. Here, if a person has no job, how are they going to pay their taxes?

I am also concerned that this legislation is being rushed to the floor today to apparently make a political point. During committee debate over the legislation, questions were raised. To his credit, the chairman agreed that we would try to get some responses from the IRS about the rules and procedures regarding debt collection, options for resolving delinquencies, payment options, tax delinquencies of IRS employees, and other issues. The chairman promised to obtain the answers to these questions from the IRS and to work with Democrats before the bill was brought to the floor.

Now, I have absolutely no doubt that the IRS failed to do what they were supposed to do; they did not give us the information. But there was a reason that we wanted that information. We wanted the information so that we could base our decisions on sound facts. If we are placing people in a position where they will lose their way of feeding their family and having a roof over their head and taking care of their kids, it would be nice to have information.

I tell my staff all the time: Give me the information so that I can make a decent decision. We don't have that information, and that is unfortunate. Hopefully, at some point, we will get it from the IRS. Again, Mr. Speaker, I don't blame the chairman. He did his part. He submitted his letter, I know he did, but we still have not heard from

the IRS. So on April 4, 2013, I joined with Chairman ISSA in sending that letter to the IRS, requesting specific information that the committee members agreed was necessary to fairly and fully evaluate the need for this legislation.

Again, without this information, it is unclear whether various scenarios under which taxpayer disputes of tax debt would be exempted under the bill. For example, it is unclear whether an appeal from a collection due process hearing, litigation proceedings in U.S. Tax Court, or hearings under the IRS' Collection Appeals Program would trigger an exemption.

Contrary to the chairman's assurances, the Republican leadership has insisted on bringing this bill to the floor without the benefit of this information and without resolving the many concerns raised during the committee debate. For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting against this bill.

Again, we need information, but more importantly, there is something that the chairman said that I think we need to be clear on. I want to see, again, a situation where everybody pays every dime that they are supposed to pay, but I don't think that people get fired if they're not Federal employees when they have a tax delinquency. So when we're talking about fairness, again, we're talking about the Federal employee, and then we're talking about everybody else.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is right. And I would take note that this afternoon the IRS did offer to speak to us over the phone but had no answers in writing, which continues to befuddle me a little bit that we can't get answers. I will continue to work with the ranking member to get those answers.

At this time, I yield 5 minutes to the author of the bill, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. I thank Chairman ISSA, Speaker BOEHNER, and Leader CANTOR for their support in allowing us to bring this piece of legislation, a piece of legislation that has come before this body before. This is not a new topic. This is not something that just sprung up with us in the last 10 days here.

Mr. Speaker, on tax day, 2013, I want to impress upon my colleagues that Federal employees who consciously ignore the channels and processes in place to fulfill their tax obligations must be held accountable. The Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act addresses noncompliance with our tax laws by prohibiting individuals with serious delinquent tax debt from Federal civilian employment.

Most taxpayers file accurate tax returns and pay them on time. Most Federal workers do that—the overwhelming majority of them do it. In fact, statistically, more than 96 percent of our Federal employees do the right thing and they do it on time. But, unfortunately, there are a few bad apples out there. There are a few people out there that, despite all the processes, all the appeals, all the things out there, Mr. Speaker, they still choose to thumb their nose at the rest of us. Unfortunately, there are 107,000 Federal workers who don't pay their taxes. It accounts for about $1 billion in uncollected taxes.

In 2011—the most recent year for which the IRS data is available—they tell us that 107,658 civilian Federal employees owed more than $1 billion. Now, the statistics say they have a greater compliance than the rest of the public. But let's remember, when you're unemployed, you're probably going to have a hard time complying. Employment for those that are Federal workers is 100 percent. They have a job. They have a responsibility to pay their taxes.

As the chairman indicated, the intent of the bill is simple: if you're a Federal employee or applicant, you should be making a good faith effort to pay your taxes or to dispute them, as the taxpayers have a right to do.

Under H.R. 249, individuals having seriously delinquent tax debts are ineligible for Federal civilian employment in the executive and legislative branch, including congressional staff. ''Seriously tax delinquent'' is defined as an outstanding Federal tax debt for which a notice of lien has been publicly filed.

□ 1800

And there are exemptions. If you're being paid in accordance with an installment agreement, perhaps you're having your wages garnished, you have an offer of compromise, or wage garnishment, you're exempted; it's not going to affect you.

The IRS has already told us on the record when they testified in a hearing that the overwhelming majority of the 107,000 people fall within that category. They testified to the body in the last Congress that roughly 12 percent of the 100,000 people would fall into this category that we're here talking about today. We've had a hearing about this. We did ask the IRS about this.

I also want to note, Mr. Speaker, on page 4 of the legislation at (c)(3):

> An employee may continue to serve, in a situation involving financial hardship, if the continued service of such employee is in the best interests of the United States, as determined on a case-by-case basis.

There's an opportunity to have the person who's in charge to make a determination: Do you know what? I have looked at this, and I grant this person an exemption.

But, as I did when I spoke to a group of HR professionals who work within the Federal Government, I told them about this and said, You need some tools to take care of the bad apples. I could see every one of their heads shaking, yes, please, give us this tool.

The bill requires individuals applying for Federal jobs to certify they are not seriously tax delinquent. Agencies will also conduct periodic reviews of public records for tax liens. Individuals with serious delinquent tax debt may avail themselves to existing due process rights, including going before the Merit Systems Protection Board.

In fact, in the last Congress, Mr. Speaker, Mr. LYNCH, who's as passionate on this issue as you can possibly find, offered some amendments. And let me read from the record when we accepted the amendment offered by Mr. LYNCH of Massachusetts:

> Mr. LYNCH. With that refinement here, a friendly amendment, I certainly would vote for the bill if the amendment were included.

The amendment was included. We did this in a bipartisan way. That's why it sailed through the House of Representatives last time and why it should sail through again.

In addition, individuals have 6 months to demonstrate that their tax debt is not seriously delinquent—something that Mr. LYNCH asked for, something we agreed with, something that we move forward with.

For many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, this legislation should sound familiar because we did pass it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Actually, at this time, what I would like to do is yield back and respond based on the other comments.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished lady from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to my good friends, the chairman of the full committee and of the subcommittee, that we were doing so well in the last few bills showing how bipartisan our committees could be. And I mean that sincerely, because the committee has been working in a very bipartisan way, particularly this year.

As I indicated in my prior remarks, there is not perfect symmetry between employees and contractors. Here is one of the examples where we do not have that symmetry.

Mr. Speaker, I am a firm believer in ''lead by example.'' I think that applies to Members of Congress, and I believe the Federal employees believe that applies to them. Why else would they have a delinquency rate less than half the tax delinquency rate of other Americans? They know they are a unique workforce.

Here is a workforce that has already stepped up front beyond the American people. They are the ones who were the first to sacrifice for the deficit, and they keep sacrificing, now in the 3rd year of a freeze and a sequester on top of it.

Why would we pick them out for any other purpose except a symbolic purpose, which is what I see here? It's not

lost on any of us, Mr. Speaker, that today is April 15. I suppose this is a bill to make sure everybody understands that we understand it's April 15. I understand entirely the importance of symbolic moves. I put out a release myself today on taxation without representation.

But here we have the best workforce in the United States, the most specialized, and the workforce that has given more than any of us.

I have a serious legal problem with this bill. This bill defines a ''seriously delinquent'' Federal worker as one against whom there is ''notice of a lien which has been publicly filed.'' Mr. Speaker, a notice of lien is a claim by the claimant, in this case, the United States. The answer may come, of course, as to any claim in our legal system from the defendant.

Here, on the basis of the claim alone, we are going so far as to allow even the employee to be fired, this at a time when Americans, including Federal employees, have had the worst hardships since the Great Depression, including homes under water and all the rest of it. It's just not necessary. If they have the best tax record in the United States, why then would they be picked out?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to emphasize that the IRS already has special procedures to recover taxes from its own employees, and I commend the IRS for that, including, by the way, being able to garnish their wages up to 15 percent and even to take disciplinary actions. Why would we need anything further, particularly at this moment in time, against our Federal employees who have endured so much?

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

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

I join with the gentlelady from the District of Columbia in applauding what the IRS has done. The IRS effectively gave itself the rules that Mr. CHAFFETZ would like to have all Federal civilian workers living under.

The IRS has a delinquency rate now of 1 percent. So if you take a fraction of that 1 percent that could possibly be out of compliance for a short period of time, and that's what happens. You've lowered the overall rate from, for example, the Government Printing Office, 7.6 percent; the 316,000 people at the Department of Veterans Affairs, 13,000 of them, or 4.3 percent, are seriously in arrears.

Mr. Speaker, the gentlelady is absolutely right: the IRS did the right thing, and it worked. You've got a compliance rate down to 1 percent failure, or 99 percent positive compliance rate.

For all the Federal workers who are listening carefully because this could affect them, they're looking to their left and their right endlessly wondering who these deadbeats are because, in all cases, it's below 10 percent, and at the IRS at 1 percent.

Mr. Speaker, the case for this legislation is made by the IRS's success, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I adopt the remarks that were made by Ms. NORTON. The delinquency rate of Federal employees is far below what it is for other employees on a general level throughout this country. I adopt the gentlelady's remarks that, yes, this is April 15, and my own staff has said, oh, I had to pay this, that, or the other.

The implication here is that we brought a bill dealing with Federal employees this day. Why? Because Federal employees are very easy to target. For people who don't like government: Well, the Federal employees, look at what they're doing. You're having to pay your taxes today before those deadbeat Federal employees. That's the message here.

Now, if this were a problem that you really wanted to deal with, it wouldn't have to be April 15. It could have been February 15 or it could be June 15. But, no, that's not the message here.

□ 1810

The message is that somehow Federal employees need to be targeted. I understand they work for us, and so they're easy to get at. And we are getting at them almost every week. We're furloughing them. We're suggesting they pay more, that they're not paying enough for retirement. We are suggesting that somehow they're less than stellar employees.

But before I conclude, let me take a second look at this.

We had a tragic event happen in Boston today, and the President was quick to call Governor Deval Patrick and say we're going to send some Federal employees from the FBI, the ATF, and other agencies to make sure that we look at this and protect America.

We extend our sympathies, of course, to all the victims and their families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield the gentleman an additional 1½ minutes.

Mr. HOYER. We express our sympathies to all of them, and we recognize that they have some employees in Boston and around this country at the municipal and State level, and, yes, at the Federal level, who are going to try to respond and make sure America is safe.

Let's send a message to those Federal employees, because they're our employees, that we respect them, their contribution. Let us not bring a bill to the floor—by the way, the gentleman is correct that it passed here not with my vote last year, because I thought it was a message that was incorrect. I thought that there were processes in place today which allow us to act against those, yes, who are tax delinquents. But very frankly, this is not a discussion today about huge tax delinquents, huge tax frauds, people who are not paying taxes to this country in which they're being so successful.

So, Mr. Speaker, first of all, we send our regrets to those who have been the subject of a terrorist act, whether it was a domestic terrorist, a foreign terrorist, but a terrorist act this day.

Secondly, we say to those Federal employees who time after time, week after week, month after month are being disparaged by their board of directors, that we understand the quality of their service and contribution. And, yes, we understand there are some who don't do what they ought to do, and we demand that they do so, but this is not the way to do it.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to do too much responding to something that asks why something was brought on April 15, except to say that the minority was very happy to have us bring on April 15 something to hold contractors responsible on tax day for taxes, and we thought appropriate that both should be about this tax day in which 99 percent of Americans have paid all their taxes, whether they like to or not, and a small percentage have not.

With that, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, only in Washington, DC, can we say that this is not a serious issue. We're talking about 107,000 people and a billion dollars in uncollected taxes when the very Americans that are paying their paychecks are writing out their checks.

I would also look at the companion piece of legislation, which is $5 billion, that deals with the contractors. What we're saying to the employees of the Federal Government—the men and women who are patriotic, who are doing their job; they're doing the right thing; they work hard; they love this country; they're the first ones to run and respond—we're going to take care of you; we've got your back. Because every once in a while there is a bad apple, there is somebody that works in that department, there is somebody that works in that agency who doesn't play by the rules like everybody else does. They give this country and they give their counterparts and their employees a bad name. We're going to stand up for them by giving that head of that department in the agency the opportunity to fire somebody if they don't comply.

Pay your Federal taxes, you're in good shape; don't pay your Federal taxes, don't put yourself in place, then we're going to give you an opportunity to be let go.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time we have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT).

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 249, the Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act of 2013.

On close examination, it is obvious that this bill is deceptive, unnecessary, and even counterproductive. It's a bill that puts additional requirements on Federal workers that the rest of the public does not face: that of losing their job because of a tax lien. On top of this, common sense will tell you it's a very difficult thing to collect taxes or any debt from somebody who doesn't have a job.

The IRS already has procedures in place to collect back taxes from Federal employees. The Federal Payment Levy Program allows the IRS to impose a continuous levy on Federal, and only Federal, employees up to 15 percent. This means Federal employees already are held to a higher standard and the IRS already has additional weapons in its arsenal, making the bill before us an over-the-top and punitive measure.

It's a solution without a real problem and a solution that will only make it harder to actually collect taxes. And I question whether this is a sincere effort to improve our Nation or just another in a long series of unfair attacks on Federal employees and the unions that represent them. These are people who haven't had a raise in 3 years. These are people for whom many are receiving furlough notices even as we speak. These are people that now we're attacking in a new and better way.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest at some point you wonder how we're supposed to attract talented and capable individuals to come to work for us when we treat them like this.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting against the bill.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time we have remaining?

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

Mr. ISSA. At this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to harken back to the comments of President Obama on January 20, 2010.

Make no mistake; the President was talking about delinquent contractors, not specifically about Federal workers. But I want you, as you listen to the President, in his own words, to wonder why should—these, too, are families. Contractors are families; they're Americans; they're people. Some of them are bad apples. Most of them do a good job.

But listen to the President as he's talking about contractors, and say: Should the same be true for Federal workers?

Quote, from President Obama:

> All across this country, there are people who meet their obligation each and every day. You do your jobs; you support your families; you pay taxes you owe because it's a fundamental responsibility of citizenship. And yet, somehow, it's become standard practice in Washington to give contracts to companies that don't pay their taxes.

Later on, the President said:

> The status quo, then, is inefficiency, and it's wasteful by the larger and more fundamental point that it is wrong. It is simply wrong for companies to take taxpayer dollars and not be taxpayers themselves. So we need to insist on the same sense of responsibility in Washington that so many of you strive to uphold in your own lives, in your own families and your own businesses.

The same should be true for Federal workers. And when those Federal workers are giving out those Federal contracts by the hundreds of billions of dollars, let them be able to look people in the face and say, We hold ourselves to that same high standard. We're not having a separate standard for contractors and for you. Those of us that do work for the Federal Government are honest in our dealings. We pay our taxes. You know what? If we don't around here, they eventually fire us.

That seems to me to be common sense and the right approach.

□ 1820

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS).

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 249.

This bill would bar individuals who work for the Federal Government and who have a tax lien from being employed by the Federal Government. I agree with Congressman CHAFFETZ and the supporters of this bill that all citizens, including our Federal employees, should pay their taxes. However, this bill is far more focused on attacking Federal employees than on actually resolving problems. This bill, H.R. 249, is a political document, not a policy solution.

The IRS says that the tax delinquency rate for our Federal employees is half that of the average American taxpayer. This legislation is the wrong approach and is destined to be grossly ineffective because it makes collecting outstanding taxes difficult—by firing the very people we'd like to pay their taxes. As a former business owner myself, in putting people into homes, I used to find out time after time that the IRS would violate their agreement. It's the IRS that violates the agreement sometimes when somebody says, I'll pay it on a regular basis, and the IRS changes that agreement without notice. That will and does happen to employees all the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ISSA. I yield myself 1 minute.

The gentleman from California is new, and I'm sure he did not mean to disparage our intention.

Our intention was, in fact, to bring accountability and, in fact, a sense of pride to the Federal workforce, one in which 96-point-some percent do pay their taxes, and of the remaining ones who do not, the vast majority has made arrangements to deal with taxes in arrears.

But, Mr. Speaker, less than a year ago, I had my house robbed. I live in a low-crime neighborhood. Less than 2 percent of the homes get robbed in a given year, but the police still responded and still said, I'll do something about your home being burglarized.

All we're saying here is: let's stop talking about the 97 percent who do the right thing, and let's deal with those who do not in a way that encourages them, like the IRS has, to start doing the right thing and lower that failure rate to 1 percent or less.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from California (Ms. SPEIER).

Ms. SPEIER. I thank the ranking member.

Let me just be very specific. Mr. CHAFFETZ, at one point, said we have a few bad apples, and the chairman suggested, Well, who are these deadbeats? Let's talk about who these deadbeats really are. $3.5 billion—54 percent of that $3.5 billion is attributed to military, active military, military Reserves, and retired military.

Now, I don't know about you, but I think maybe we should rethink this because the truth of the matter is 54 percent have either been in the military or active military. Furthermore, 46 percent of those ''deadbeats'' are civilian Federal employees retired and military Federal employees retired.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. ISSA. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the gentlelady is entitled to her opinion, but I don't believe her facts.

Our information shows that, in fact, first of all, this bill only pertains to civilian personnel. It does not affect uniformed military personnel. Uniformed military personnel can be court-martialed for not living up to their financial obligations. That is certainly more than we are considering here.

The fact is the numbers we presented, the numbers quoted here, represent civilian workers. Some of those civilian workers do also serve in the Reserves, and some of them are also retired individuals, but let's understand this is not about the men and women deployed in uniform. This is, in fact, about civilian workers who may have supplemental incomes from retirement, who may, in fact, also be Reserves. This is all about people who receive often more than $100,000 a year and have not made arrangements to catch up on taxes that are seriously in arrears by up to $10,000 or more.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield that 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN. I thank my very good friend from Baltimore.

The basic problem with this bill is that it claims to fix a problem that doesn't exist. The fact is that Federal employees have a delinquency rate that is less than half of what it is for the average American taxpayer. The fact is that there already exist programs to garnish wages and annuity income for delinquent filers. The fact is that agencies can already take disciplinary action against employees who have tax debt, including that of termination.

So why are we doing this—to punish people because they chose public service?

This bill would have virtually no effect on revenue because there are so few civil servants who are delinquent and, invariably, there is some understandable reason, just as there has been for a number of our colleagues over the years.

So it's not about bringing down the debt. This is about threatening Federal workers, singling them out by suggesting that there is some kind of endemic problem when there isn't. You've already docked the Federal workforce with up to 14 unpaid furlough days. You've cut more than $100 billion from their pensions and pay. You've just sequestered $600 million from the IRS.

Federal employees work for our constituents, and they work for us. Their jobs are to carry out the laws that we make. The majority of this House apparently ran for office on the claim that the Federal Government isn't working, and now that they've been elected they're trying to prove it—by threatening and accusing and, thus, demoralizing the dedicated public servants who have fought our wars, built our roads and bridges, enforced our laws, invented the technology that powers our economy, and researched the treatments that heal and save our loved ones. And all this Congress can do is to threaten them with bills like this.

This is not a fair bill, and thus I urge a ''no'' vote on it.

Mr. ISSA. I now yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. This bill doesn't threaten the Federal employees. It only threatens the Federal employees who don't pay their Federal taxes. You pay your taxes because you get your income from the taxpayers. It doesn't affect you.

What I hear continually, Mr. Speaker, is, Oh, no problem here. Don't worry about it.

It's $1 billion in uncollected taxes. For far too long, this Congress has ignored this. They keep giving contractors contracts up to the tune of $5 billion a year. I introduced that bill as well.

So to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this bill is unfair, it's unwarranted, it's going to harm Federal employees—it's going to protect Federal employees, because the ones who are doing the right job, that are patriotic, are protected under this bill. Only those who thumb their noses and won't pay their taxes are the ones who should be scared of this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 15 seconds.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield the remaining time to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN. The problem with this bill is that it singles out Federal employees by threatening and accusing them, suggesting that there is an endemic problem within the Federal Government, and there isn't.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MORAN. I am more than happy to yield to the gentleman from Utah if I have the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ISSA. I yield 10 seconds to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ).

Mr. CHAFFETZ. There are 107,000 people who haven't paid about $1 billion in taxes. To suggest there isn't a problem is, I think, factually without merit.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 3¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. ISSA. I yield myself the remaining time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close on a little bit quieter note than the debate. The debate was, rightfully so, heated, and it was heated because, in fact, we are making an important symbolic statement in this legislation.

$1 billion is a lot of money to the taxpayers listening, but the principle here is extremely important. It's a principle that shows that, when the IRS changed their rules, they didn't fire very many people. I'm sure, in fact, what they got was compliance, far greater compliance, but let's go through a few things because the gentlelady, my colleague and friend from California (Ms. SPEIER), used a larger number, and the larger numbers, in fact, are worth using in closing.

□ 1830

We've been talking, up until now, about $3 billion, $2.976 billion, that in fact is about the civilian employees of the Federal Government. They have a delinquency rate of approximately 3.62 percent. She mentioned other individuals, and I want to mention in closing their delinquency rate:

Civilian retired: understand, these are not individuals you can fire. They're retired, but their delinquency is 2.5 percent.

Military active duty: these are the men and women who have a different set of rules. They can be court-martialed if they don't live up to their obligations, 2 percent. Remember, that 2 percent includes all those who may eventually comply.

Military Reserve and Guard: these are the men and women who give up their day jobs, often taking a huge pay cut in doing so, often unanticipated, 2.4 percent.

Military retired, 4.3 percent. Mr. Speaker, I can't account for why, when military people retire, they find themselves seriously in arrears in taxes. But what I can say is when we look at 1 percent at the IRS, and 2 percent for those men and women getting a private's pay or a corporal's pay, they manage to keep their taxes straight.

The Federal workforce has a high compliance rate, as has been said repeatedly by my colleagues. Their compliance rate is nearly twice the rate of the public as a whole. Of course, the public as a whole includes over 7 percent unemployed, and it includes all kinds of other characteristics that lead to people being in default.

What we're saying here today is the IRS made a decision to have a compliance standard that has dramatically reduced failure to comply, and has put us in a situation where people of the IRS can say proudly: We pay our taxes. We pay our taxes at a 99 percent rate, and we deal with those who do not live up to promising to pay the rest.

We just want the same for the Federal workforce, and I believe Federal workers listening here today would agree that in fact since most of them do exactly what's right, all of them should be held to do what is exactly right. I urge passage of the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that all Americans, particularly Federal workers, should pay their taxes in full and on time, period. Fortunately, according to the most recent tax compliance statistics from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the vast majority of Federal workers, more than 96 percent, pay their taxes in full and on time.

This admirable compliance rate is especially impressive when considering that the Nation's overall compliance rate is approximately 83 percent. Further, with an average delinquency rate for Federal employees of 3.3 percent, compared to an average delinquency rate of 7.4 percent for all American taxpayers, it is clear that our dedicated civil servants take their tax obligations seriously. In addition, for the small minority of Federal employees who fall behind on their taxes, the causes of financial hardship are not unique to Federal workers, but similar to the challenges and circumstances facing many middle class American families who find themselves temporarily unable to meet their tax obligations as a result of life-changing hardships, such as a divorce, serious illness, or a spouse losing a job.

Simply put, H.R. 249 is a solution in search of a problem.

The Congressional Budget Office cost estimate found that implementing H.R. 249 will cost taxpayers $1 million in 2014 and about

$500,000 in subsequent years, since it will not enhance revenues. Although it may seem counterintuitive that the so-called "Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act" would increase the deficit, it is logical when one considers current law. Presently, the law provides for a hierarchy of penalties based on the seriousness and willfulness of the offense related to improperly filing a tax return, and it provides IRS the authority to garnish wages to recoup owed taxes from employees.

H.R. 249 would replace this system with an inflexible mandate to fire any Federal employee with an outstanding tax debt to the Federal Government for which a public lien has been filed. If my Republican colleagues are so concerned about tax delinquency, then why not use the $1 million cost of this legislation to hire additional IRS enforcement agents to chip away at our Nation's net tax gap of approximately $385 billion?

We recently held a hearing where the head of the U.S. Government Accountability Office stated that the tax gap is the single largest item we can address to achieve savings. Could it be that actually recognizing such valuable work does not fit neatly with their negative narrative of the Federal workforce? Spending more than $1 million to implement H.R. 249, which only targets our country's civil servants and does nothing to address our Nation's $385 billion tax gap, is neither a prudent nor wise policy response. I urge all Members to oppose this legislation.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 249, the misleadingly named Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act. This bill unfairly singles out federal employees for punishment instead of applying a uniform set of rules to individuals who may be delinquent on their taxes.

All Americans should pay their taxes, and those who fail to do so should be penalized. But this bill denies public workers the full complement of due process rights that would be available to any other American under the same circumstances. In effect, this bill would require the firing of any public employee even if they are legitimately contesting their delinquency through the established process. There are laws and regulations on the books that address how tax delinquency should be handled and how public employees who are delinquent on their payments should be disciplined. By by-passing those procedures, this measure unfairly targets public employees simply because they work for the government.

Public servants work hard every day providing a wide array of public services for Americans, from helping to nurse our wounded veterans, to discovering cures and treatments for diseases that plague millions of American families, to protecting our food supply.

The passage of this bill is the latest in a series of unfair congressional attacks on public workers that has ranged from cutting their pay to reducing their benefits. And this bill arrives just as many of them face further pay cuts resulting from agency imposed furloughs.

Federal workers do not deserve to be treated like this.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 249.

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. ISSA. 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.

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. 1162, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 882, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 249, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE IMPROVEMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1162) to amend title 31, United States Code, to make improvements in the Government Accountability Office, as amended, 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 gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 408, nays 0, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 103]

YEAS—408

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Holt
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Moran
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch

Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—24

Brown (FL)
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Courtney
Davis, Rodney
Fincher
Hastings (FL)
Honda
Keating
Lummis
Lynch
Marchant
Markey
McDermott
Meng
Miller, Gary
Moore
Pallone
Pittenger
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Thornberry
Westmoreland

□ 1857

Messrs. COHEN and GRIJALVA changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR VICTIMS OF BOSTON MARATHON EXPLOSIONS

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

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the people in Boston who lost their lives and the many others who were seriously injured today. I hesitate to call what the event was; but whatever it was, it was a terrible tragedy. No matter how you measure it, whether official or unofficial terrorism, anyone who acts in such a manner is clearly an evil person and deserves to be called as such.

I know that today the rest of America stands with us, as we have stood with others before us, hopefully to never have to do it again. This event was not just a Boston event. The Boston Marathon is an international event that draws people from around the world. I would not be shocked if many of the people injured today were not just from Massachusetts. They're probably from other States and possibly—probably—other countries.

Today is a holiday in Massachusetts. It's a State holiday called Patriots Day. It's the day that we celebrate the actions of our patriots back in 1776 that started the Revolution that brought to birth this country. We remind ourselves regularly what it is to be an American, what it is to be a patriot, what it is to be a member of a society that cares for each other.

I know that the Members of this House will join me in wishing well all those people who were injured and sending our deepest condolences and sympathies to those people who were killed, as well as wishing well our men and women of law enforcement. I have absolutely full faith and confidence that they will find the people that have done this and bring them to justice so that we can all rest a little easier at some point.

The SPEAKER. The House will now observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of today's attack in Boston.

CONTRACTING AND TAX ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 882) to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 407, nays 0, not voting 25, as follows:

[Roll No. 104]

YEAS—407

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Amodei
Andrews
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Holt
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Moran
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Radel
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—25

Brown (FL)
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Courtney
Davis, Rodney
Fincher
Gohmert
Hastings (FL)
Honda
Huizenga (MI)
Keating
Lummis
Lynch
Marchant
Markey
McDermott
Meng
Miller, Gary
Moore
Pittenger
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Thornberry
Westmoreland

□ 1908

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE TAX ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 249) to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that persons having seriously delinquent tax debts shall be ineligible for Federal employment, 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 gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 250, nays 159, not voting 23, as follows:

[Roll No. 105]

YEAS—250

Aderholt
Alexander
Amash
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bonner
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Carney
Carter
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
DeFazio
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Esty
Farenthold
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallego
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Himes
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Maffei
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Petri
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Quigley
Radel
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rokita
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Scalise
Schneider
Schock
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (FL)
Young (IN)

NAYS—159

Amodei
Andrews
Barber
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Deutch
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grimm
Gutierrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Higgins
Hinojosa
Holt
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
King (NY)
Kirkpatrick
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Maloney, Carolyn
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McGovern
Meeks
Michaud
Miller, George
Moran
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Price (NC)
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Rooney
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watt
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—23

Brown (FL)
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Courtney
Davis, Rodney
Fincher
Hastings (FL)
Honda
Keating
Lummis
Lynch
Marchant
Markey
McDermott
Meng
Miller, Gary
Moore
Pittenger
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Thornberry
Westmoreland

□ 1916

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California changed her vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So (two-thirds not being in the affirmative) the motion was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 105 on final passage of H.R. 249, I inadvertently voted ''nay.'' I would have voted ''aye,'' which is consistent with my past position on this legislation. In the 112th Congress, I voted ''aye'' on rollcall No. 538 on final passage of H.R. 828, which is virtually identical to H.R. 249.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1101

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1101.

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

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 8. Concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2014, revising the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal year 2013, and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2015 through 2023.

TERROR HITS BOSTON MARATHON

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today is Patriot's Day in Boston. To commemorate Boston's fierce spirit of independence, Bostonians host a worldwide marathon.

Today, as runners approached the finish line of the marathon, terror erupted: two explosions, 14 seconds apart. Two other bombs were also found by law enforcement. The scene was described as a war zone.

Amidst the chaos and blood-filled streets, there was a group of people who ran towards the danger, as they always do. They were America's first responders. They were there within moments. They disregarded their own safety to assist the wounded and secure the area.

Fellow marathon runners from all different States and countries also rescued strangers and the wounded. They helped treat their wounds and carried others to safety. Offers of help are coming from all over the United States.

There are two confirmed dead and over 100 injured.

The person of interest in custody is reportedly a 20-year-old Saudi national. Those responsible for this attack of death and terror must be brought to justice because, Mr. Speaker, justice is what we do in this country.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1920

THE BOSTON TRAGEDY

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

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I had planned to come to the floor this evening, as we do every Monday, to talk about the importance of climate change and the importance of this country addressing an issue that is so critical in front of us. But it seems tonight that it's actually quite more appropriate to offer my sincere condolences to the people of Boston, Massachusetts, but most especially to those who've been injured and lost their lives and to their families, and to offer up from the Fourth Congressional District and from all of us as Americans, that we stand united behind this city in its efforts to bring those who committed this great harm to justice, but also to stand with the families of first responders and all of those who are called to action.

THE BOSTON TRAGEDY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, two explosions tore through the finish line of the Boston Marathon, according to the Boston Police Department. These blasts have so far reportedly resulted in several deaths and perhaps more than 100 injuries.

Mr. Speaker, when faced with such adversity, now is the time for the American people to come together with their thoughts and prayers for those who have been injured and those lives that have been so tragically lost.

My thoughts and prayers are also with the Boston fire rescue and emergency medical personnel that, as I speak, are still on the job.

My thoughts and prayers are also with the Boston police and investigators, that they will quickly determine who is responsible for what appears to be a cruel, senseless, and cowardly act.

Today marks the 238th annual Patriots' Day in Boston. Mr. Speaker, let it be known that the evil that transpired today will not deter the courage of American patriots from the past, the present, or the future.

THE BOSTON TRAGEDY

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, it was my intent as well, as my colleague indicated, to come to the floor and discuss and urge the fast consideration of gun safety legislation and to speak as well to the jurisdictional issue of the Homeland Security Department working on cybersecurity.

But I, too, believe it is most important to offer my deepest sympathy to those who lost their lives in Boston on Patriots' Day in this Boston Marathon that all the world comes to; to thank the first responders, including nurses and doctors, volunteers, marathon runners, and those who came from around the world to be in this unifying event. We give to them our deepest concern.

I express my deepest sympathy to my colleagues who represent the Boston area, to Governor Deval Patrick, and to those families who lost loved ones and those who are now lingering in hospital beds. I wish them well and stand with my colleagues as we did on 9/11 and many other times, that those who perpetrated this heinous act will be brought to justice.

As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, Mr. Speaker, I also hope to look at venues and big events in the pending weeks and months so that we can reassess the safety and security for the American people. That is our charge and our responsibility, and I know that together we will be able to accomplish it.

Again, my deepest sympathy for this loss. We cannot express the depths of the feelings of sympathy that we have.

May God bless you, and may those who have lost their lives, may they rest in peace.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL ROBOTICS WEEK

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to just rise and congratulate and celebrate those that have been participating as a part of National Robotics Week this week.

Mr. Speaker, robotics have become an increasingly important part of our lives both in the workplace and at home, and the opportunities for this exciting industry grow daily.

Minnesota has now developed into a leading robotics ecosystem with dynamic organizations like Robotics Alley. Minnesota is now in the forefront of finding opportunities for robotics innovation and growth outside their traditional military role.

Last month I had a chance to visit the robotics lab at Weaver Lake Elementary School in Maple Grove, where I saw sixth grade students that were participating in a Google Hangout with NASA engineers, learning important engineering skills. We should inspire these students and others to explore careers in robotics and other science, technology, engineering, and math fields.

I'm proud to say that Minnesota has now led the Nation in robotics innovation and education, and I'd like to wish all the students taking part in this May's Minnesota State High School League's robotics competition good luck.

THE BOSTON TRAGEDY

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, this was to be a happy and glorious day in Boston. Because of the explosions that were set off by evil people, at least two have been killed, we're told, and scores of others wounded.

Our thoughts and our prayers go out for those who were wounded and injured and for the families of those who were killed. That will continue as the hurting continues, and may God help us to respond in a proper manner.

THE COMING EFFECTS OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALMON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the House leadership for allowing me to utilize this hour to talk about some of the coming effects of the Affordable Care Act.

THE BOSTON TRAGEDY

Mr. BURGESS. First, I do want to take a moment and join with so many of my colleagues who have just spoken on the floor in acknowledging the sacrifices that were made by first responders, people who ran toward the sound of the destruction this afternoon in Boston; and I certainly would recognize that even now, at this late hour, doctors and nurses are working in the emergency rooms in Boston to try to provide comfort to the afflicted and save life and limb for those who were damaged this afternoon, an act so astonishing in its cruelty, it is difficult to comprehend.

Mr. Speaker, in 5½ short months from right now, October 1, 2013, the full effects of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act are going to start to be felt around the country. It's important that we take a few moments this evening and think about the road ahead, think about the things that are supposed to come online on October 1, and think about the contingencies if those things are not able to be accomplished.

It was just a few weeks ago in this town when speaking to the American

Health Insurance group, one of the information technologists from Health and Human Services talked about this informational hub that is supposed to be developed by the Department of Health and Human Services, this informational hub that will allow people to go online to sign up for their benefits under the Affordable Care Act. The comments of this individual were quite revealing. Speaking to an AHIP group earlier this year, he said:

> The time for debating about the size of the text on the screen or the color or whether it's a world-class user experience, that's what we used to talk about 2 years ago. Now let's just make sure it's not a Third World experience.

That's a pretty sobering admission from someone who is charged with providing the information hub, the information technology, the computer architecture that is supposed to be the underpinnings of the Affordable Care Act.

Bear in mind, it was 3 years ago, March of 2010, that the Affordable Care Act was signed into law. So 3 years later, billions of dollars spent in the implementation phase, and they're not sure if they can get this computer system up and running by October 1, which, by law, is when it is supposed to kick in.

□ 1930

That is a pretty significant admission from the information architect at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Now, when Barry Cohen, who is the head of the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight in the Department of Health and Human Services, was addressing the same group in response to a question, he was a little bit unclear as to whether or not they would be, in fact, ready on that October 1 deadline.

He said:

> We'll have to wait. Then we'll be in a position to know which contingency plans we actually have to implement.

In other words, we can't plan for the contingency until we get there and see that a contingency plan is necessary. But, after all, what are contingency plans but those plans that are put in place because something unexpected may happen?

Last week, on the other side of the Capitol, in the other body, the Senator from West Virginia said:

> ObamaCare is so complicated, and if it isn't done right the first time, it will just simply get worse.

That's a pretty startling pronouncement from someone who was, in fact, a pretty big cheerleader for the Affordable Care Act when it went through the Senate.

He went on to say:

> I believe that the Affordable Care Act is probably the most complex piece of legislation ever passed by the United States Congress. Tax reform has obviously been huge, too, but up to this point, this—the Affordable Care Act—is just beyond comprehension.

Now, what does the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services have to say about all of this? She maintains that the Affordable Care Act will lower the cost of premiums for everyone; but in fact, in the past couple of weeks, she has admitted:

> These folks will be moving into a really fully insured product for the first time, and so there may be a higher cost associated with getting into that market.

Translation: you're going to be paying more.

She goes on to say:

> Some men and some younger customers could see their rates increase. Women and older customers could see their rates drop.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would submit that the coming rate shock is something for which people are actually unprepared. They have been told for 3 years that, after all, this is the Affordable Care Act, and it's going to make health care more affordable for all Americans; but the reality is somewhat different from the truth that is espoused by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Let's think about some of these things for just a minute, because they are important. Remember when the Affordable Care Act was debated? Remember the President's discussing the Affordable Care Act? Everyone wanted to talk about patients with preexisting conditions: patients with preexisting conditions are frozen out of the system; patients with preexisting conditions can't get care. Well, they meant couldn't get insurance, because people can get care. Nevertheless, this was proposed as an enormous problem. The Affordable Care Act was going to fix it.

How did the Affordable Care Act fix it?

Next year, when the exchanges are up and running or when Medicaid is expanded, people, indeed, may be incorporated into that system. Until that day arrives, they were to be taken care of through what is known as the Preexisting Condition Insurance Program, or PCIP, which is the Federal preexisting risk pool that was set up for the first time under the Affordable Care Act. Five billion dollars was put forward to help people with preexisting conditions with their premiums. Now, there was a little bit of a barrier to entry. You had to be uninsured for 6 months' time before you would be eligible for coverage under the preexisting condition program.

I've got to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I thought the Supreme Court was going to knock this thing out of the water. I thought there was no way in the world the highest court of the land could look at this thing and agree that it is constitutional under the Commerce Clause; that is, you can compel commerce in order to regulate it. I just knew that that day when the Supreme Court ruled that they would agree with me. In fact, they did; but then they went on to say that, in fact, since it's all a tax, Congress has the power to tax, and for that reason, it's not unconstitutional, and the law was allowed to stand.

Leading up to that day that the Supreme Court made that pronouncement, I was so convinced that we as Members of Congress had an obligation to our constituents—to people who were, in fact, thinking that they were covered under the Affordable Care Act—to provide a contingency plan, particularly for those people who were covered under this new Federal preexisting condition insurance plan. Well, it turns out I wasn't right, and the law was constitutional.

But what would have happened last June 30 if the Supreme Court had said that it was unconstitutional, and the whole thing was struck down? As a consequence, people who were in the preexisting condition program would have found themselves without insurance, and that would have been a pretty significant event to have occurred. I felt that we needed to have a contingency plan to cover those individuals.

Now here we are some 6, 8 months later; and what happened in January of this year? The PCIP program ran out of money. It ran out of money at the end of January, and they said, We're not taking any more people into this program.

We had a hearing a couple of weeks ago in the Committee on Energy and Commerce and heard from a patient who had thought she was in the queue, in that waiting period, to get into the Federal preexisting condition program except that they suspended enrollment at the end of January. You've got to believe that there were a lot of people who were in that 6-month waiting period who were waiting for their time to come up so that they could, in fact, enroll in this preexisting condition program; but as of the end of January, they were shut out. So the committee wrote a letter to the President that said, We'd like to help you here. There are probably other moneys in the Affordable Care Act that can be moved around and can continue to cover these individuals until January 1 of 2014 when the exchanges and the Medicaid expansion and all of the goodies prescribed in the Affordable Care Act can come on line.

One of the things that we were told in leading up to the passage of the Affordable Care Act is that there were millions of people who fell into this preexisting condition trap. In fact, on the floor of the House, you heard people quote figures of 8 to 12 million people. The Speaker of the House at that time, Speaker PELOSI, said 125 million people had preexisting conditions. In fact, that was a little bit of a misnomer because, when you look at the people who are covered by insurance in this country, the vast majority is covered under what's called a ''large group plan,'' or what we know as ''employer-sponsored insurance.'' A preexisting condition exclusion can occur in that environment, but it's much, much rarer, and there are typically open enrollment periods in which a person can

get taken on to his employer's insurance. Now, for 65 percent of the population, that's not the issue. Certainly, for people in the small group market and in the individual market, in the small group market and in the individual market, there was a problem.

On the numbers that people quoted prior to the passage of the Affordable Care Act—8 million, 10 million, 12 million people—how many people were in the Federal preexisting condition program at the end of June when I worried that the Supreme Court was going to strike the whole thing down?

There were 65,000 people and certainly every one of those individuals with a compelling story—and not a small population but a manageable population. If we are just talking about trying to correct a problem for 65,000 people in a country of 310 million, I would submit that we can do that without destroying the existing program, the employer-sponsored insurance, that people said they liked and wanted to keep.

Remember, if you like what you have, you can keep it?

Instead of taking care of a problem for a relatively finite but compelling population, the administration and, at the time, the congressional Democrats pushed through a bill of ''we just want to control everything about your health care.'' They got their wish, but now we had probably 100,000 people in January who were in the Federal preexisting condition program, and now no new people can sign up for it because it is going to run out of money.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit that there is other money available in things like, we call them, ''slush funds'' that were built into the Affordable Care Act; things like the Medicare Modernization Act; things like the fund that is to allow for other activities in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. So, by just shifting some money around, these people who have preexisting conditions, in fact, could be taken care of, and we have the ability to do that. Really, it would be a relatively easy lift at this point, and perhaps next week we'll see legislation on the floor.

Can you imagine if this had been a Republican President who had taken people off the Federal preexisting condition program? You would have heard about it from every newspaper in the country, and every television outlet in the country would have talked about it. How much did you hear? Well, you're probably hearing about it tonight for the first time. You'll hear about it a little bit more next week. People don't want to talk about the failures embedded in the Affordable Care Act, but it is important that we do so.

□ 1940

Now, when this bill was passed into law, March of 2010, the then-Speaker of the House, Speaker PELOSI, claimed that the Affordable Care Act would create 4 million jobs, 400,000 jobs almost immediately. Well, that hasn't turned out to be exactly true, either.

The Federal Reserve reported that employers are citing the uncertainty embedded in the Affordable Care Act as reasons for layoffs in companies and the reluctance to hire new employees.

The application that was proposed by the Department of Health and Human Services for people to fill out to get coverage in the exchanges next year actually asks an applicant if their job is no longer offering health coverage in the next year. Clearly embedded in the Affordable Care Act was a risk to job creation in this country, and we're now seeing that actually come into being.

The law does not treat everyone the same. It creates essentially a new underclass. It promises universal coverage, but it leaves some workers' families without coverage. Now, one of the most significant embedded problems in the Affordable Care Act is if an individual is working and their employer is providing them employer-sponsored insurance, that employer is required to do that; or if that employee looks for coverage in the exchange, that employer may be fined. But if the employer provides that employer-sponsored insurance, great. But he doesn't have to apply it, he doesn't have to provide that insurance to their family. This is a significant problem because that family, which right now may be covered, next year may not.

But here's the other part of that. That family would not be eligible for a subsidy in the insurance exchange because the employer is providing the benefit to the employee, but there was nothing in the law that said they had to continue family coverage. So who is going to be affected, primarily women and children. A headline in the Fort Worth Star Telegram a few weeks ago, and the Fort Worth Star Telegram is generally supportive of the administration and generally supportive of the Affordable Care Act, but under their headline was, ''500,000 Children to Lose Health Benefits Under the Affordable Care Act.''

This was actually not through something that was revealed in the Department of Health and Human Services, but rather a rule that was proposed by the Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service. It turns out that children who lose insurance because the primary employee will be covered but the family will not, those children who lose insurance will not be fined by the IRS for not complying with the insurance mandate; but that is scant consolation for the fact that now they have no insurance and they have no reasonable way of achieving that because, after all, the cost for insurance is going to significantly increase under the Affordable Care Act.

There is a 21-page application for Americans who feel that they should be covered under the Medicaid expansion. A 21-page application is pretty significant. It does ask some questions that you have to ask yourself, are they germane to someone who is applying for health insurance. But nevertheless, the application is out there. It's in the public domain, albeit it's a draft at this point. My hope is that the Department of Health and Human Services will refine that, but most of the 27- to 35-year-olds that I know are not going to spend a lot of time filling out a 21-page application.

We were told in the run-up to the passage of this law that it would, in fact, pay down the deficit. It was $142 billion over 10 years, but it was supposed to reduce the deficit. Does anybody really believe that anymore? Of course not. And now the further evaluation of the costs and the expansive costs that are going to occur under the Affordable Care Act, probably an additional $1.5 trillion, at a conservative estimate, as to what this will add to the deficit over the next 10 years, and this is just for the subsidies and the exchanges and for the Medicaid expansion alone.

Now, why does that matter? Mr. Speaker, it matters because in just a few short weeks, the statutory borrowing authority of the United States will be met or exceeded. And this Congress, this House, will once again be involved in another discussion about raising the debt limit. In July of 2011, we had this discussion. It was pretty acrimonious and attracted a lot of attention and a lot of publicity, none of it good. We're going to have that same fight occur again.

A lot of people are concerned about the sequester. They say, we wish the sequester had never happened. But remember, the sequester was what the President proposed in order to get the expansion of the debt limit to a point where he would not have to deal with it again until after election day 2012. So the President got his wish. He said the sequester was good; it will allow us to get past this point and to move on. But now people are dealing with the aftermath.

I would just ask you, what is the sequester going to look like in the summer of 2013, because the debt limit will not be just expanded to cover the obligations. There is going to have to be some spending discipline that goes along with that. I don't know what that will be. I'm not privy to those discussions, but will all the money that is promised to be there for the Medicaid expansion, for the subsidies in the exchange, will it in fact be there, or will that be exposed to some type of sequester-type device? I don't know the answer to that question, but those are questions in which this House will have to deal in literally a few short weeks' time.

There has been significant tax policy that has gone into effect since the Affordable Care Act was passed. Just this year, five new taxes—significant taxes—have occurred, as a result of the Affordable Care Act. There's a payroll tax that has increased almost 1 percent, 0.9 percent.

A payroll tax for people who earn over $200,000 a year, joint filers of $250,000 a year, some people look at that and say we knew that Medicare was getting into trouble. Maybe that is a good thing that that payroll tax for Medicare has gone up. Well, it might be except the money doesn't stay in the Medicare trust fund. It's collected, and then it immediately goes into the general revenue in order to pay for or offset the cost of the subsidies that are going to exist in the insurance exchange.

One of the more onerous taxes that was begun on January 1 was a 2.4 percent gross receipts tax on medical devices. Class II and class III medical devices as defined by the Food and Drug Administration are now subject to a 2.4 percent gross receipts tax. That's not a tax on profits; that's a tax on gross sales. It is significant. Sure, there are some big companies that will make due; but really it's the small entrepreneur who is developing medical devices, and this is happening all the time. Those individuals are the ones who are going to be particularly hard hit. And, as you can imagine, it may reduce some of that entrepreneurial activity or send it overseas.

We already have a Food and Drug Administration that's sometimes difficult to deal with as far as getting things approved. Europe and Central Asia are not so difficult to deal with. And, hey, by the way, there's not that gross receipts tax. Perhaps we ought to move our manufacturing somewhere else. And, of course, the jobs go with the manufacturing.

There's been a change in what are called flexible spending accounts. Flexible spending accounts are that money which you are able to designate at the beginning of every calendar year, and you can have pretax dollars that can be spent for recurrent medical expenses.

This now has been capped at $2,500 a year. The amount was much higher previously; but under the Affordable Care Act, in order to offset some of the additional costs of the Affordable Care Act, they said we're going to cap those flexible spending account contributions to $2,500. That started this year.

So if you've got a recurring medical expense that occurs every year, and think about someone with a family member who has a chronic medical condition or a family with a special needs child where they wanted to be able to set some dollars aside at the beginning of the year, not have them taxed so that they could pay for whatever it was that was going to be required, they are now capped at $2,500. People are going to very quickly find that amount is exceeded, and that they have been caught in this so-called FSA trap, or flexible spending account trap.

For people who deduct medical expenses from their income tax, and as you know, currently for the last tax year for which we all just prepared our taxes and filed them this evening, there was a 7.5 percent exclusion from your adjusted gross income, that is, until your medical expenses equaled 7.5 percent of your adjusted gross income, you didn't get to deduct medical expenses from your tax. That amount has actually increased to 10 percent for next year. So people who were accustomed, people with a lot of medical expenses who were accustomed to keeping up with those receipts and then being able to deduct those medical expenses as they exceeded 7.5 percent of their adjusted gross income, they're now not going to be able to deduct those expenses until after 10 percent of their adjusted gross income.

□ 1950

So who have we punished here?

We have punished the families with special needs children. We have punished people with chronic medical conditions. We've basically gone after the sickest Americans to say you're going to pay a little bit more for what everyone else is going to receive in the Affordable Care Act.

There is going to be a tax on insurance companies—I'm sorry—a tax on insurance policies that people will have to pay. This will go into a couple of different accounts, a couple of different funds, but the bottom line is it costs more every year to buy your insurance.

And then, beginning in 2018, the so-called tax on Cadillac insurance plans kicks in. And who's this going to affect?

Well, yes, it will affect higher-income earners who get a generous insurance policy. But it also affects union members whose insurance policies were part of their collective bargaining agreements over time, and those policies which now are going to be judged to be Cadillac plans will actually be taxed at a much higher rate starting in 2018.

There was supposed to be an exchange set up for small business. It was called the SHOP Exchange, small business health policies. Twenty-nine times there were deadlines that were missed in setting up the SHOP exchanges. And now, just in the past couple of weeks, the Department of Health and Human Services said, it's pretty tough, pretty complicated. We don't know if we can do it or not, but we're giving ourselves another year. This won't happen until 2015.

I think this is one of the things that really caused some of the consternation over in the Senate because in the other body this was one of the deals that they made in order to get the Affordable Care Act passed, in order to get it to the floor of the Senate in the fall of 2009.

It is instructive for people to remember how this thing came to be in the first place. Now, in the summer of 2009, the committees of jurisdiction here in the House—Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, Education and Labor—all debated a version of the House health care reform bill.

Now, make no mistake about it. I think it was a crummy bill. H.R. 3200 was the number. It did go through the committee process. It was amended several times in the various House committees. From there it went to the Speaker's desk, where it was all kind of consolidated; all three committee products were kind of melded into one, and then it came to the floor of the House, doubled in size, during that 2- or 3-month hiatus, and was passed by the House of Representatives in the fall, in November of 2009.

Not a single—well, one Republican vote, and the rest carried by Democrats. Thirty-five Democrats voted against it because of some of the problems contained within that legislation.

But the important thing is, as bad as I think it is, it did go through the regular House process. We may have been curtailed in the number of amendments we could offer in committee. Our time for debate in committee may have been limited but, nevertheless, it did come through the committee process.

Not so in the Senate. H.R. 3200 has never been seen or heard from again. It passed the House, went over to the Senate to await activity, and there it went, up into the ether somewhere. No one really knows what happened to it.

But, wait a minute. There's a health care law that was signed by the President in March of 2010. How did the health care law come into being?

Well, the House had passed another bill in July of 2009. It was H.R. 3590, dealt with housing. I think it passed the House with very few negative votes. But it was a housing bill.

It went over to the Senate to await further activity, and that's the bill that was picked up by Senate leadership that was brought to the floor of the Senate and amended. The amendment read ''strike all after the enacting clause and insert,'' striking, of course, the language for the housing bill, which was the base bill, and inserting health care language, and that was the bill that the Senate passed late on Christmas Eve in 2009, right ahead of a big snowstorm that was coming to town.

All the Senators wanted to get out so they passed this bill. Sixty votes. Not a single Republican vote. Passed with entirely Democratic votes.

Now, under normal circumstances, H.R. 3590, which was now the Senate health care bill, and H.R. 3200, which was the House bill, would have gone to a conference committee. They would have worked rough edges out. They would have worked the differences out between the two bills, and a conference report would have come back to both Houses of Congress, the House and the Senate, and that would have been voted on, up or down.

The problem was that, remember, it took 60 votes to pass it on the Senate side. Shortly after H.R. 3590 passed on the Senate side, a Democratic seat was lost. Scott Brown was elected from Massachusetts and, as a consequence, that 60th vote was no longer available to the Democratic leadership in the Senate.

So what are they going to do?

Well, they said that the House will just simply have to pass H.R. 3590. After all, it was a House bill that was passed already by the House in July of 2009, amended by the Senate, to become a health care bill. All that is required for it to become law is for the House to take a vote; will the House now concur with the Senate amendment to H.R. 3590. So many as in favor, say aye.

If that is a simple majority, 218 votes here in the House of Representatives, if that is a simple majority, then that's the end of the discussion. The bill goes down the street to the White House for a signing ceremony, and that's exactly what happened.

Now, it took 3 months to accomplish that, because no one here in the House thought H.R. 3590 was a very good legislative product.

In fact, let's be honest, Mr. Speaker. It was a rough draft that had been produced by the Senate Finance Committee, the staff of the Senate Finance Committee, as a vehicle to get the Senate to conference with the House. They never expected for this thing to be signed into law. It was a vehicle to get to a conference to then sit down with the House, and let's work out these differences between the two of us, and then we'll get a conference committee product to come to the floor. But it didn't work out.

As a consequence, the bill that was signed into law was one that was never intended to become law. It was a product produced by the staff of the Senate Finance Committee as a vehicle to get them out of town before Christmas Eve so that they could then get to the conference committee where the real work, the real work of writing this health care law would occur.

The American people were cheated by this process, Mr. Speaker. And now, we're left to deal with the consequences.

And what are the consequences?

500,000 children, according to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, being taken off their parents' employer-sponsored insurance. People in the preexisting program who had been waiting patiently for their turn are now told, we're sorry, it's full up. No more space. You can't come in.

It didn't have to be this way. There were good ideas on both sides that could have been taken into account.

One of the fundamental questions I think we have to ask ourselves over and over again is where were the country's Governors when this bill was actually written. Well, of course it was written by the Senate Finance Committee staff, so the Governors were nowhere in the room. A lot of deals that were struck between some of the special interest groups and the White House were all done down at the White House in July of 2009. The Nation's governors weren't involved in that.

Why were the Nation's governors so reluctant to accept the exchanges, the Medicaid expansion?

Well, the answer, Mr. Speaker, is because they were dealt out of the process. And then, the rulemaking that started happening after the law was signed began to scare them, but a lot of the rules were held until after Election Day.

The rule governing essential health benefits—what Governor in their right mind is going to sign on to an exchange program where they don't even know what they're going to be required to cover? They don't know how much money it is going to cost them?

Well, it's no surprise that 26 States said no dice to the exchange. An additional six States said maybe we'll do a partnership, but you go ahead and set the program up through the Federal level first.

And as consequence, the Office of Personnel Management is now required to set up exchanges for 26 States, plus six that might want partnership, and that's a tall order, which is why Gary Cohen said, I'm not sure we're going to need a contingency plan, but we can't know what contingency we have until we actually get there.

I will submit there is going to be a need for a contingency plan. The sooner that the agencies admit that to the appropriate committees in the House and Senate, the sooner they can begin to work on a solution for a problem.

Because, Mr. Speaker, let's face it. January 1 of 2014, there's going to be an emergency room, there's going to be an operating room, there's going to be a delivery room where a patient and doctor are going to come in contact with each other, and they don't need the uncertainty of what this legislation has dealt them.

I thank the Speaker for the time this evening, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2000

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROTHFUS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to be recognized by you to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

On this tragic day, as we watch the events unfold in Boston, each of our hearts go out and our prayers go out to the victims, the victims' families, and all of those who are doing so much to put back together the great city of Boston while our hearts bleed for the whole country. I am, I think, optimistic since the President—at least his Office—has declared this to be an act of terror. It clearly is—the timing, the planning, the strategy. I believe we will bring those perpetrators to justice. Many of us fear that this is another episode in a long series of episodes of terrorist attacks against Americans in the United States. And it troubles us more when it happens here rather than when Americans are attacked anywhere else in the world.

But, Mr. Speaker, I add to this point that we are a resilient people. We are proud, self-confident, tenacious people. And if anyone attacks Americans, thinking somehow that it weakens our resolve, it has the exact opposite effect. It strengthens our resolve, it brings us to action, it galvanizes us to action. Even though as years go by and we look back on some of these attacks on Americans and that our vigor might diminish because we may think we have resolved some of the issues with regard to the terrorists that are attacking us, Mr. Speaker, I announce here to you tonight that the American people are going to stand together. We stand with the people in Boston, we stand with the Massachusetts delegation, we stand with the Northeast, we stand with the 50 States. We stand together in defiance of the kind of terrorism that attacks Americans.

We stand for some things here, Mr. Speaker, and there are a series of components of what it takes to be an American or become an American. It starts with the list of the pillars of American exceptionalism, which along the line of that list, Mr. Speaker, are freedom of speech, religion, the press, freedom of assembly, keep and bear arms. They're the property rights. In our judicial branch there's no double jeopardy. You are tried by a jury of your peers. You can face your accuser. The powers that are not delineated in the Constitution, enumerated in the Constitution, are devolved to the States or the people, respectively. All of these are components of American exceptionalism.

Along with that, there's another component: free enterprise capitalism. And there's a piece to this also, which is the rule of law. It says in the Constitution ''the supreme law of the land.'' And we must abide by the Constitution and the language in it. The language in the Constitution isn't something that can be redefined away from us, but instead, Mr. Speaker, it is a written contract. It's a contract from the generations that ratified the Constitution and the subsequent amendments to the succeeding generations.

Our charge is to preserve, protect, and defend this Constitution of the United States. And if we find that the wisdom of our predecessors didn't foresee circumstances in the current area where we are, we have an obligation not to redefine the Constitution, defend always the language of the Constitution and the understanding of the meaning of that language at the time of ratification, but instead have enough courage to use the tools to amend the Constitution if we need to. The supreme law of the land.

The rule of law is an essential pillar of American exceptionalism. Without it, we wouldn't have a reason to uphold

the Constitution. It could be defined away from us. And I often speak to groups of people and inform them that the Constitution guarantees us these rights but it can't be guaranteed and upheld generation after generation unless each generation defends the language that's in the Constitution, the original understanding of the language in the Constitution, and exercises those constitutional rights.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, if our society decided at some point we're not going to any longer exercise our freedom of assembly? And so for some reason if the stigma of society would discourage assembly, for us to come together and talk about the issues that we want to have our dialogue and exchange on, if we didn't exercise that, the next generation could hardly get out the Constitution and look at it and say, Well, in here it says we have freedom of assembly, and reinstall it. Or, for example, if we gave up our Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms, can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, our children, our grandchildren, and our great grandchildren after a generation or two or three going without any right to keep or bear arms, opening up this Constitution, dusting off this document and pointing to it and saying, There is a right here to keep and bear arms?

You cannot reestablish these rights that are there in this Constitution if we once stop exercising them. That's why we exercise freedom of speech, we must exercise freedom of religion, and we must exercise freedom of the press. All of these rights are rights that we have to utilize. They are rights that define for us in this Constitution, within it, the supreme law of the land, the rule of law.

There's another component of American exceptionalism as well, aside from these rights that are in the Constitution and the free enterprise piece, which is something that gives our economy its utmost vigor. I would advise people that are preparing to take the naturalization test to become an American citizen by choice rather than birth, that's a choice by the educational foundation that they understand our history, our language. One of the questions that will be there is: what's the economic system of the United States?

Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is free enterprise capitalism. That's what gives our economy its vigor. And when we move away from free enterprise capitalism, when we move towards government management of our economy, government bailouts, government deciding who's too big to be allowed to fail, eventually so much of our private sector economy gets co-opted by government that we lose the vigor of free enterprise capitalism and we lose some of the promise of the ascendancy of the great American civilization.

There's another piece of this also that I speak to relatively often, Mr. Speaker, and that's American vigor. That's the last component of the American exceptionalism that I'll list here tonight.

American vigor. Now where does that come from? Well, we have natural-born American citizens that are part of this civilization and culture. These natural-born American citizens are the descendants of those who came here willingly with a dream. When they came here with a dream, they saw the promise of the Statue of Liberty. And in the image of the Statue of Liberty are the list of American exceptionalism components, the pillars of exceptionalism that I talked about, most of them within the Bill of Rights. But our forefathers were inspired to come here in order to realize their dream. They saw that they couldn't make it in their home country where they hoped to be able to do that and they couldn't realize their potential in their home country. They knew there were challenges here. They came here to rise to the level of their potential. Because of that, there's been a natural filter that has been built. And it's the willing legal immigrants that came to America who were inspired by these pillars of American exceptionalism which are embodied within the image of the Statue of Liberty, and they decided they would find a way to get on a trip or travel, whatever way they could to come to the United States, get in line to become a legal immigrant to the United States. And so many of them have dynamically and dramatically contributed to our economy, our society, our culture, and our civilization. We are that kind of an America.

But there's a unique American character, a unique American spirit, a unique American vigor that comes from those who came here in a legal way that have contributed to our society and our culture and the things that they have taught their children and the things that their children have taught their children and each succeeding generation on down. We're a unique character and quality here. We're not just the descendants of Western Europe or Latin America or wherever it might be. We are the cream of the crop of every donor civilization on the planet that has sent people here to become Americans. That's a special charge. It's a special responsibility. It's distinct from any other Nation in the world. We're the only Nation in the world where people can come here and become American. It doesn't work to go to Norway to become Norwegian or Holland to become Dutch. But it does work to come to the United States of America, embrace the civilization, embrace this culture, embrace this Constitution, take the test to qualify for naturalization, become an American citizen.

□ 2010

I remember going to a naturalization ceremony in the old Executive Office Building. I remember the speaker that day—as there were maybe 125 new American citizens naturalized that day—and he said: Look out that window. When you look out the window of the Indian room at the Old Executive Office Building, you see into the South Lawn and the White House from the side. He said: From this day, the person who lives in this house next door—pointing to the White House—is no more American than you are.

Now, that's a profound statement. It's true in the United States, and I don't believe it's true anywhere else.

So we have a special mission, Mr. Speaker. We have a special responsibility, a responsibility to promote God-given liberty and freedom throughout the world, a responsibility to hold free enterprise capitalism together, a responsibility to exercise our freedom of speech, religion, the press and assembly, and our right to keep and bear arms—all of these things are in the Bill of Rights.

But I fear that too many in this Congress and too many across this country have lost touch, lost contact with what that means. And so, because of political purposes, it seems to me there are a number of them that are trying to devise a way to make accommodations out of political expediency that in the end undermine one of the most essential pillars of American exceptionalism, the rule of law.

Now I take you back to 1986. In 1986, there was a long debate—it was months long; in fact it may have been nearly 2 years long—a debate about what to do about 800,000 people who were in the United States unlawfully. Through that debate, they worked out an accommodation. The 800,000 was more or less generally understood to be 1 million people; and Ronald Reagan, in his honest way, was reluctantly persuaded to sign the 1986 Amnesty Act. When he did that, the promise was that we would get enforcement, that immigration law would be enforced with the utmost vigor of the executive branch of the United States Government. That was the promise that was made by this Congress. It was a promise that was made by the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, who was as trustworthy as any President in my lifetime, as principled, and one whom I've long admired and, as I said, only let me down twice in 8 years of the Presidency of the United States. But he made a commitment to enforce the 1986 Amnesty Act.

He was honest with us; he called it amnesty. The definition of amnesty then is the definition that we have of amnesty today. To grant amnesty is to pardon immigration lawbreakers and reward them with the objective of their crime.

Now, what happened back in 1986? The people that were unlawfully present in the United States were pardoned, with some exceptions—those that had felony records, for example, those that were violent criminals, and some others—but generally they were pardoned. They were given an instantaneous legalization. The exchange was

that those that were in the United States at the time of—there would be a cut off—and those who came after would be faced with the full enforcement of the law.

This, in 1986, was going to be the last amnesty ever. The rule of law was to be restored, and there would never be the promise of an amnesty again. Well, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that didn't hold up. History knows that. History notes that. There have actually been six or seven less significant amnesties along the way since that period of time, each one of them drip, drip, drip, making another promise and another promise to people that if they could just get into the United States, if they could just live in the shadows, eventually there would be another amnesty that would come along. By the way, the 1986 amnesty, that 800,000 to 1 million people became 3 million people. Three million people were granted amnesty back then because of document fraud and underestimations of the numbers of people.

So we're watching as the Gang of Eight will presumably introduce a bill tomorrow in the United States Senate. We don't know with confidence what is in that bill, but we do know all of the initiatives that have come from the open-borders side of this argument. We know what Democrats think—they're politically empowered. They're for any kind of amnesty. They'd do instantaneous citizenship. They would mail it in if they could because they see a significant political gain. But on the Republican side of the aisle, it seems to me that they've suspended a full understanding of what goes on in history or what would take place contemporarily.

So what are we trying to accomplish, is the question, Mr. Speaker. I'm convinced that the President, who came before the Republican Conference, he made a statement to us and he said: Republicans, you will never win another national election unless you first pass comprehensive immigration reform. I don't know that we should be looking to the President of the United States for political advice for Republicans in the first place.

The second part he said was: I'm trying to help you Republicans. Some of the people in that room believed that, Mr. Speaker. I did not, and neither do thinking Americans believe that the President of the United States, who has been charged with attempting to, let me say, significantly weaken the Republican Party, would be seriously trying to improve the Republican Party.

What are we trying to accomplish, Mr. Speaker? Well, I'd like to restore the rule of law. I hear Members of this House and Senate talk to me about, for example, they'll say: Well, the President of the United States has refused to enforce immigration law. That's true. He has unconstitutionally, lawlessly refused to enforce immigration law. He has defined classes of people that will be waived as subjects of enforcement. Now, I have people on my side of the aisle come over and they say we have de facto amnesty. No, we have literal amnesty. We have factual amnesty, not de facto amnesty.

The President has declared, in a lawless fashion, amnesty for those who do not threaten him politically. That's large classes of people, in an unconstitutional fashion, he has announced that they are issuing work permits, creating a work permit/visa for people that are in the country illegally when the law requires that they come out and enforce the law rather than grant them a work permit.

So, de facto amnesty? No. It's real and it's literal amnesty. And now it seems as though many people on my side of the aisle have leaped to this conclusion that this amnesty exists—call it real, literal, or de facto amnesty, it exists—and so the only way we can deal with that is to go ahead and officially act and legalize so that we can somehow resolve this issue. This is an issue that's been created by many, many years of failure to enforce immigration law. But the idea that Congress should ratify an unconstitutional lawless act on the part of the President is beyond my comprehension as to how that solves the problem.

I hear one of the voices in this immigration issue say, we will never get border security unless we first legalize the people that are here illegally. Well, how does that follow? How is that rational, that we'll never get border security? We have a President who's not going to enforce the law. We know that workplace enforcements are down 70 percent under this President. Janet Napolitano declares that we have fewer interdictions on the border; therefore, that proves that there are fewer border crossings. Well, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't prove that. If you want to have fewer interdictions, you just slow down the enforcement on the border.

Now, I actually do believe that there are fewer attempted border crossings. That's a component of the economics. But we should look and see what's the level of illegal drug interdictions. That will tell us something about how many illegal border crossings there are and how porous our border is. We should look and see how many people end up fatalities in the desert trying to come into the United States across Arizona, for example, or the other States. That will give you some real data on what kind of border crossings we have.

We have the question of granting people a path to citizenship, and the argument, Mr. Speaker, that somehow this is not a path to citizenship when it's a path to a green card; the argument that a green card is not a path to citizenship. If a green card is not a path to citizenship, then there is no path to citizenship here in the United States, but of course we know that it is. A green card is a path to citizenship, and a path to a green card is just a little bit longer path to a path to citizenship. The American people understand that; it's not a mystery.

So some of the proposals are also, well, in this exchange, instantaneously—this is a proposal that will come out of the Senate tomorrow—they will instantaneously legalize everybody that's here in the United States illegally, and then set about, if someone is discovered who happens to have a felony on their record, has committed a violent crime, perhaps, maybe three serious misdemeanors, they might package them up and send them back to where they can wake up legally in their home country. They might do that. But meanwhile, you can see that there's no will to enforce the law for law breakers. There's no will to do that.

□ 2020

So if they pass their legislation—instantaneously 11 million or maybe 20 million or more people are legalized—can we imagine that if all of these conditions that they write into this bill as far as border security are concerned and operational control of the border and an Entry/Exit System and an E-Verify system, if all of that goes into place, they say then there's going to be a path to citizenship? Can we imagine that once people are legalized that they would ever be delegalized because of the failure of the executive branch to follow through on all these promises that are going to be made of the executive branch by the legislative branch of government by presumably a President who hasn't followed through on his oath of office to take care that the laws be faithfully executed?

So here's one presumption. They'll want to put E-Verify into this and then make E-Verify mandatory. Therefore, that would mean that we would have full enforcement and the jobs in the workplace. Well, no, we won't have enforcement unless the executive branch enforces.

They've already told ICE to stand down. I can give you a whole list of circumstances by which ICE is prohibited from enforcing existing law by this executive branch of government. And who could imagine that E-Verify, if it passes and becomes mandatory law, is going to be enforced to the extent that it's effective?

I say, instead, just simply clarify that wages and benefits paid to people illegally living in the United States are not business expenses. When that happens, then you'll see employers make that decision because they will not want the tax, the penalty, and the interest liability that goes along with a tax violation.

That's a clear piece. It's not a piece of policy that's being discussed by these people because they are not serious about solving this problem in the way rule of law people would be.

E-Verify won't be enforced adequately to be effective. It could be passed. I think it could be passed as a condition.

The next one is, finish the border fence. We have that language in place

now. We passed 700-mile border fence language called the Secure Fence Act. Actually, 854 miles, and that's because the border is crooked in some places, and we've got about 40 miles of effective fence.

And so follow through on the existing law that we have is my recommendation. We don't have to have a new law to build a fence. Build the fence, secure the border and then come back and tell us that you've actually accomplished that. Let's watch this thing with drones and see if that's taking place, and other security. We know from the last drone report that the Border Patrol, even drone assisted, were not interdicting half of those that attempted to cross the border, and that number in that sector of the border was over 3,000.

Then the argument about operational control of the border. You would hand that over to who? A border commission to be named later. Or hand it over to the judgment of Janet Napolitano, who has already declared that they have significant operational control of the border. I don't know anybody that's buying that particular line.

And then they would also implement an Entry/Exit program. Well, we have that. It's called US-VISIT. It's been in law since about 1996, when it first began to be implemented as entry, and then we added the exit piece of it, but it's never been implemented. I've stood at the border and watched as people come in, swipe their card, they go register on a computer that they come into the United States, and an hour later the car goes back south again and doesn't have to stop because there's no exit system in place. Why not? This administration and the previous administration were not determined to complete it.

So piece after piece of this, Mr. Speaker, says that it's another empty promise, and they tell us we are going to fix the immigration situation so that we don't have to deal with it again in our lifetime. Well, we know better. The 1986 Amnesty Act wasn't the last one; it was the promise of the next one. We've had six or seven since then.

This is a huge promise of amnesty, and it wouldn't be the last one; it would be the biggest promise for the next one. And anyone who could get into the United States before this is enacted could stay here as long as they choose, in the shadows or out. And if those in the shadows get to be great enough numbers, then we will have established that there will be another amnesty down the line.

We cannot be a Nation unless we have borders. We cannot declare we have borders unless we decide and control who comes in and who goes out. That's an important obligation. If there's going to be an America, we must preserve the rule of law. And while we're doing it, Mr. Speaker, we must also preserve and protect and respect the dignity of every human person.

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

CBC HOUR: BOSTON MARATHON EXPLOSIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROTHFUS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for your recognition. Under ordinary circumstances, I would stand before you today as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, where for the next 60 minutes the CBC would speak directly to the American people about an issue of significance that the country is confronting.

However, today, as a result of the extraordinary events that occurred a few hours ago in Boston, Massachusetts, there is no issue that is more significant than standing with the people who participated in the marathon, those runners and those observers and those first responders, who were victimized earlier today.

As President Barack Obama mentioned, this is a moment where we're not Democrats or Independents or Republicans; we're Americans. We're not Blacks, Whites, Latinos, or Asians; we're one today. And as representatives from 43 different Congressional districts across the country, the CBC would like simply to extend our thoughts and our prayers to the family members of those who died earlier today. We want to extend our great sympathies and our best wishes to those who were victimized, and we are praying for full and complete recovery.

We also, of course, want to extend our thanks and our heartfelt gratitude to those first responders who, once again, demonstrated courage under fire and bravery in the face of dangers that were seen and unforeseen.

Now, America is a great country, and whatever is revealed about the attacks that took place earlier today, we're confident that we have the resolve to continue to move forward as strong as we always have been. In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor and throughout World War II, Americans demonstrated great resolve. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, in the face of the possibility of nuclear catastrophe, Americans demonstrated great resolve. In the face of the uncertainty that followed the horrific Oklahoma City bombings, Americans demonstrated great resolve. And of course in my home city, the great city of New York, and all across this country in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, America demonstrated great resolve this time.

No matter what the circumstances reveal about who was behind what took place earlier today, we're confident that America will continue to show tremendous resolve. Our spirit will not be broken. We're confident that law enforcement will identify those responsible for what took place earlier today and bring them to justice.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2030

IN HONOR OF ISRAEL'S 65TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, tonight's Special Order is meant to honor Israel's 65th Independence Day. But first, today's horrible tragedy of Boston demands our attention.

Security officials continue to investigate the details of the incident. I know that all Americans join with us today, our thoughts and prayers for those affected, the victims, their families and the courageous first responders.

When acts like this occur, I find it even more important that we carry on and refuse to allow our lives to be dictated by those wishing ill. So, in many ways, it's fitting to discuss Israel tonight, a nation that knows all too well the pain of these tragedies. In fact, today Israelis commemorated Memorial Day to honor the memory of 24,000 Israeli men, women, and children who've been killed in terror attacks and wars over the past 65 years.

Immediately following Memorial Day, though, Israel transitions to Independence Day, when Israelis and Jews across the globe celebrate the modern-day revival of the State of Israel.

The abrupt transition from the sadness of Memorial Day to the joy and celebration of Independence Day embodies the Israeli narrative and serves as a poignant lesson in resilience.

Sixty-five years ago, Israel began as a modest nation of 800,000 people, fighting for its very survival. Today, Israel's population stands at over 8 million. It's a thriving liberal democracy, the homeland for Jewish people, a global economic and high-tech powerhouse and maintains the region's most powerful military force.

Sixty-five years ago, this success was not guaranteed and at times seemed almost unobtainable. Memorial Day, which just ended tonight, and Holocaust Remembrance Day, which was commemorated last week, are potent reminders of the struggles the Jewish people have faced and continue to face.

The story of the Jewish people is riddled with triumph and tragedy, and Israel's national anthem, called ''Hatikva,'' meaning ''The Hope,'' sings of the 2,000-year-old dream to be free, people in a land of our own after centuries of pogroms and inquisitions and genocide. That dream has been realized in the establishment of the State of Israel.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce and bring up a very distinguished member of our Illinois delegation, Congresswoman JAN SCHAKOWSKY.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Thank you so much for organizing this Special Order. I want to thank my colleague, Representative FRANKEL from Florida, for bringing us together. I notice we're wearing the colors of the Israeli flag today in celebration of the 65th birthday, the anniversary of the State of Israel.

I, too, when I walked over to the Capitol, our gleaming Capitol today, I saw our flag at half-mast, recognizing the tragedy that happened in Boston today; and I, too, want to acknowledge and give my condolences to those families of the two that we know that have been lost, have been killed, and I wish well the dozens more that have been injured. I do believe in what the President said, that whoever did this will be brought to justice.

So, along with Israelis and their friends around the world, we are also at a moment of celebration, celebrating the renewal of the Jewish state in the land of Israel. For 65 years, our two nations have enjoyed a close friendship as well as a strategic alliance.

Since the United States became the first country to recognize Israel a mere 11 minutes after her founding, President Truman recognized Israel as a state, and that relationship and that bond has continued to grow and strengthen. Rooted in shared ideals and dreams, as well as common global threats, the United States-Israel relationship remains as critical today as it was in 1948.

As a Jew and a Member of Congress, I have a strong personal connection to the State of Israel, and I'm committed to continuously working to grow and strengthen that U.S.-Israel relationship. And even in the face of terrorism and war, Israel has become a leader in technology and energy and scientific innovation.

Those people who haven't gone ought to go and see the spirit of Israel, despite the relentless years of war and attack and terrorist bombings. This is a resilient people looking to find joy in everyday life and looking forward to the future.

I traveled to Israel this past February, and like I had been on previous trips, I was struck for the need for a peaceful future for the Israeli people. It's my wish today, on the celebration of the anniversary, that the years to come will show a time of peace. We need peace.

Israelis paused on Remembrance Day, which ended at sunset in Israel, to commemorate the over 20,000 Israelis who have given their lives in defense of the Jewish state, as well as the thousands more that were killed in terrorist attacks. Even as we celebrate Israel's history, we remember those who gave their lives for their country.

As we continue to stand with the Israeli Government in the face of threats and terrorism, I strongly believe that the United States must also continue to work together with our Israeli partners to ensure a secure and peaceful future for Israel and for the entire Middle East. Israel is our closest friend and ally in the turbulent Middle East region, and the U.S. Congress remains committed to a safe and secure future for the Israeli people.

There aren't a whole lot of things I can say with confidence that represent both sides of the aisle, but I can say that the support for the State of Israel truly is a bipartisan, a nonpartisan issue for Members of Congress. For over six decades, the U.S.-Israel relationship has been fortified by this bipartisan understanding about the critical importance of the relationship to both countries. So today, Congresswoman FRANKEL, as we celebrate the 65th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, we remain committed to a safe and secure future for Israel.

Thank you so much for allowing me to participate in this wonderful hour of celebration.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Thank you very much, Congresswoman SCHAKOWSKY.

We're also joined here today by a newcomer to Congress, but very much a rising star, my neighbor and friend in the Palm Beach County delegation and the distinguished colleague who is on the House Financial Services Committee and Small Business Committee and I know recently took a trip to Israel, Congressman PATRICK MURPHY.

□ 2040

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Thank you, Congresswoman FRANKEL.

First, I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt condolences to all of those affected by the tragedy that occurred earlier today in Boston. My heart goes out to all the friends and families of those involved during this most difficult time.

I also want to take this opportunity to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the declaration of the State of Israel. Since David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel on April 26, 1948, the United States and Israel have maintained an unbreakable bond. This bond is rooted in our shared values and common goals of democracy, freedom and a desire for peace. In this time of difficult security challenges and economic concerns, this partnership is more important than ever to the prosperity of both nations.

Bilateral trade between the United States and our ally Israel creates jobs here at home and contributes to the American economy. The United States' trade with Israel has reached over $40 billion, and Israel accounts for 25 percent of U.S. exports to the Middle East. The United States and Israel share a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that has attracted leading technology companies like Intel, Microsoft, and Google to Israel. At the same time, tens of thousands of jobs in the United States are created by Israeli companies, and Israel has the third most companies on the NASDAQ stock exchange.

In just 65 years, Israel has accomplished extraordinary achievements. Whether in technology, business, agriculture, or defense, Israel's innovations and advancements contribute to the daily lives of all Americans. For example, some of the most important technology we use every day, including instant messenger, voice mail, and computer processor, were developed in Israel. Additionally, Israeli medical advances are saving lives here in the U.S. and around the world, and Israeli-developed military technologies are protecting American troops stationed in the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, our partnership with Israel is not just an investment in American jobs and American prosperity; it is an investment in freedom and democracy. Simply put, investing in Israel is investing in America, and we must continue to maintain our strong relationship with the State of Israel. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Israel on her 65th Independence Day and in reaffirming the lasting partnership between our two countries.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Thank you, Mr. MURPHY.

Now I have the privilege of introducing the distinguished ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, ELIOT ENGEL, from the great State of New York.

Mr. ENGEL. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida.

Let me say, as the ranking member on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I really want everyone to know what a valued member of our committee the gentlewoman from Florida is. She is a new Member of Congress, but we value her opinions and thoughts and hard work on our committee. I know she has got a very bright future on our committee and in Congress, and I thank her for inviting me to participate in this very important Special Order.

As we've heard, Mr. Speaker, from so many of our colleagues who have spoken, the United States and Israel have much in common. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. The United States, of course, is the oldest democracy in the world. We have similar values. The standard of living of citizens in both our countries is higher than in most of the world, and Israel and the United States share common concerns.

Israel is celebrating its 65th birthday, a celebration of the holiday of

Yom Ha'Atzmaut, and I think all Americans want to congratulate the people of Israel for persevering in a very, very dangerous neighborhood and in a very, very dangerous environment.

Earlier today, we had a terrible tragedy in the United States, in Boston, in which lives were lost, in what seems to be a bombing, or a potential terrorist attack. I don't want to jump to conclusions, but that's the way it appears. As a New Yorker who lived through September 11, 2001, terrorism is something that, whenever it raises, or rears, its ugly head, all people of goodwill must condemn it. The people of Israel have lived through that—have lived through bombings of busses and bombings of pizza shops and bombings of weddings and just random bombings of people who care not about life but who care about death. So we pause, of course, for the loss of life in Boston today, and we understand that, when Israel has gone through terrorist attacks, there has been a similar crying out of wanton acts of terror.

I just came back a few weeks ago from Israel. I had the honor of traveling there with President Obama, and the President, of course, is working feverishly to try to move towards a two-state solution, which all of us believe is the best thing that could happen—a Palestinian state and an Israel Jewish state. Certainly, the United States will always stand by its ally Israel. I'll be going back to the region in a couple of weeks, visiting Israel again with senior members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and of the other relevant committees because we realize how important it is to continue to keep the relationship between the U.S. and Israel.

It has been a very strong partnership, and it has been a good partnership. Israel is one of the greatest supporters of the United States in the United Nations and elsewhere, and of course the United States is one of the greatest supporters of Israel. Iron Dome, which is saving countless Israeli civilian lives, has been funded for and provided for by the United States, and the United States has stood by the people of Israel in its constant fight against terrorism.

I am just so happy that we are celebrating Israel's 65th birthday. I guess that makes Israel a senior citizen these days. Israel is obviously a very new country but of people in a very, very old land. Israel is the ancient Jewish homeland, and the rebirth of the Jewish state in 1948 is a miracle for all to behold.

So I am very, very proud of the relationship that we in the United States have with the State of Israel and the people of Israel. I am very proud that we have strong supporters of Israel on both sides of the aisle. Israel, as Ms. SCHAKOWSKY said before, is a bipartisan or a nonpartisan issue in that people, Democrats and Republicans, understand that Israel's fight for democracy, against terrorism and for its people is really the same fight that we have here in the United States.

Again, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Florida for including me in this, and I look forward to continuing to work with her on the Foreign Affairs Committee and in Congress on this issue and on so many other issues of importance to the people of the United States.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Thank you very much, Congressman ENGEL, and thank you for your great leadership to us in Congress.

Now I am very pleased to yield to another new Member of Congress, a colleague of mine in the class of 2013 and a colleague of mine on the Foreign Affairs Committee and on the Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, from the great State of Illinois, BRAD SCHNEIDER.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you. It is an honor to speak in celebration of Yom Ha'Atzmaut, the 65th anniversary of the birth of Israel, and of the partnership between our country and the country of Israel for all of those 65 years. I am proud that the United States was one of the first countries to recognize the new state 65 years ago and that our bond has continued to grow.

I had the privilege of being in Israel 15 years ago for the Jubilee celebration—to see the vibrancy of the country and the hopes for prosperity and peace in the region that were shared by so many of the people—and as we come forward 15 years, to see that the partnership between the United States and Israel has continued to grow, as was mentioned earlier, in so many different aspects: on security and defense as well as economically and culturally. We are sharing technologies. We are sharing experiences. We have a special bond built on common values and a common dream of a better world for our children, and we are contributing to the world in so many different ways.

□ 2050

I was in Israel 3 years ago, and I had a chance to see some of the new technologies that were emerging, both with electric cars and some of the medical technologies; and you see the partnership with the United States and Israel in technology is contributing to the entire world. In medical aspects you see where research is being collaboratively done between our country and researchers in Israel, working to find cures for disease to ease the pain and burdens of families and individuals who are afflicted with different diseases, cancers, and other types. This is something that's a beacon to the rest of the world.

My district in Illinois, the 10th Congressional District of Illinois, is home to many people who have family in Israel, who travel to Israel. Our connection to Israel is not strictly political; it is personal. And the relationship we have and will continue to have is a special bond that I'm pleased and honored to be able to represent.

With you, being a member of the Middle East and North Africa Committee, being a life-long advocate for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, it is a great distinction and honor for me to stand here to celebrate Yom Ha'Atzmaut, the 65th anniversary for Israel. I am honored to be going to Israel again in 2 weeks with members of the Chicago community. We will be going throughout the country. We will have a chance to visit Iron Dome, I will have a chance to visit Sderot, and places where Israel is at the front lines of a battle that is ours together.

So I am proud and honored to represent Illinois here in the United States House of Representatives knowing that the bond, the connection, between the United States and Israel is sound, secure, and permanent.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Thank you very much, Mr. SCHNEIDER.

Tonight, we have had a very good, I think, discussion here because in Israel, as we speak, Israelis dressed in blue and white flood the streets for ceremonies and parties to celebrate all that Israel has accomplished. And what a lesson we have learned because even in our sadness in our hearts tonight for the people in Boston, we can learn from Israel the resilience of how to come back from tragedy.

I thank both of you, Mr. SCHNEIDER and Mr. MURPHY, for reminding us that Israel is not just to be known for a place of trouble and conflict. They have developed some of the leading universities in the world, boast the highest ratio of university degrees to population. And as Mr. MURPHY mentioned, it is oft been labeled ''the start-up nation'' for its remarkably advanced entrepreneurial economy and is among the world's leaders in high-tech industry and is at the forefront of research and development in the field of renewable energy sources.

And most incredibly, even as Israel struggles to protect and care for its own population, Israel regularly sends humanitarian aid, search and rescue teams, mobile hospitals, and other emergency supplies to help victims of disasters around the world.

We know that Israel has its share of difficulties, as every country does; but despite the current impasse for the peace process, the majority of Israelis continue to show support for a two-state solution.

So as we conclude tonight, I want to say that I know on a personal note, as a mother of a combat veteran, I know too well the pain and fear and lying awake at night wondering if your child will come home safe. That's the feeling that parents in Israel often have. That is the reason I know that I will work with Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and the rest of my colleagues here in what I am so happy to say is a bipartisan way to strengthen the United States-Israel relationship.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say happy birthday to the State of Israel.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Jewish state of Israel on

Israel's Independence Day, Yom Ha'atzmaut. I am proud to join many other colleagues in the United States Congress in honoring the strength of the US-Israel friendship and the shining example that Israel gives as America's most reliable partner in the region.

Last month, when President Obama visited Israel, Prime Minister Netanyahu gave him a special gift, a nano-chip, designed and created by Technion scientists. Set against the backdrop of a Jerusalem stone, this nano-chip recalls the advancements of Israel in the context of its ancient roots. Inscribed side by side on the nano-chip were replicas of the Declarations of Independence of the United States of America and the State of Israel.

This gift reminds us of shared values between the United States and Israel—spelled out on some of our Nations' earliest documents. In Israel, their Declaration of Independence refers to its commitment to ''uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of race, creed or sex'' and a guarantee of ''full freedom of conscience, worship, education and culture.'' In the United States, centuries before, our forefathers pledged ''that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.'' These shared values demonstrate that the US Israel relationship can withstand the toughest challenges because the foundation of the relationship is built on enduring values.

In these uncertain times in the Middle East and North Africa, Israel seems surrounded by chaos. On one border, Israel must rely on Egypt to disrupt weapons and human smuggling into Gaza. To the North, Lebanon is politically fractured, with an avowed terrorist group, Hezbollah, in the government. In Syria, a post-Assad era seems near, yet opposition groups are becoming more closely aligned with those who seek Israel's destruction. In Jordan, the state is under tremendous burden to cope with refugees from other more unstable parts of the Middle East, leading to a shaky foundation for one of Israel's most important relationships. With an intransigent Palestinian leadership refusing to negotiate, a political solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict seems out of reach. Iran's illicit nuclear program remains an existential threat to Israel, haunting every decision that Israel's government makes.

Israel does not have to be reminded of these threats. Every year, on the day before Independence Day, Israelis mourn the loss of those who were killed in service to their country. The Israeli Memorial Day, Yom Hazikaron, is marked by the sound of a piercing siren that stops the entire country. Because everyone in Israel has been touched by the violence of the Arab-Israeli conflict—no matter how young or old.

And yet, despite these challenges across the region and the world, the Israeli people remain resilient and strong. Their economy is growing rapidly, they continue to have just and fair elections and their democracy thrives. On this Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel has much to be proud of.

And the United States' commitment to Israel is unshakeable. As Israel faces difficult decisions ahead about peace and security, the United States will stand by its ally and friend.

I wish the people and government of Israel a Chag Sameach, a happy holiday on this 65th Independence Day.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Israel, our partner in peace and prosperity, for its 65 years of independence.

On April 14, 1948, just hours before the British Mandate was due to end, Israel's Founding Fathers and Founding Mothers, led by future David Ben-Gurion declared the birth of the State of Israel in Tel Aviv.

Many of the Jews who lived in Israel in 1948 were survivors of the Second World War and the Holocaust, which pushed international opinion for the need for a homeland for the Jewish people where they could be free from persecution and free to build a better life.

Since that fateful day in Tel Aviv, Israel and its people have worked tirelessly to build a thriving democracy that is economically prosperous and at peace with neighboring nations.

The first nation to recognize Israel's independence, I am proud to say, was the United States, which welcomed Israel into the community of nations just hours after its declaration.

The bonds between our two great nations, bound together by common interests and shared values, have only grown with time.

It is also fitting to take this occasion to speak on the future of a lasting peace. As I and my colleagues in this chamber have said repeatedly, the only path to peace is through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Mr. Speaker, I hope on this joyous day that we reflect on the need to redouble our efforts to bring peace to the region and continue to tangibly support our friend and ally in its request for peace.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the contribution of the State of Israel as it celebrates its 65th anniversary as a vibrant and open democratic society.

I had the great privilege to live and work in Israel in the mid-1960's and celebrated Israel's 22nd anniversary by taking part in a three-day walk from the shores of Tel Aviv to the hills of Jerusalem.

Now about 50 years later, I marvel at the extraordinary changes that have taken place in Israel.

In its 65 years, Israel has managed some incredible achievements.

These have been true gifts to Americans and the world—healing the sick, improving security, and promoting commerce.

Israeli doctors and researchers have produced countless medical advances.

Israelis have developed techniques to better assist cancer and Parkinson's patients.

Israelis invented the PillCam to better detect disorders of the GI Tract.

Israelis are pioneering robotic surgery.

Israelis were key to developing the cell phone—which has transformed American business and, of course, allowed many Jewish mothers, like myself, to instantly get in touch with their children.

Israelis also invented voice mail technology.

Israel developed the Iron Dome Missile Defense System which has already saved countless lives from missile attacks. And, Israel is sharing this vital technology with the United States.

Israel is also a leader in conservation and renewable energy. In fact, Israel is the only country in the world that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees, made more remarkable because this was achieved in an area considered mainly desert.

And, Israel continues to be a shining example of democratic governance in the Middle East.

Israel is the only country in the Middle East with protections for free speech, free press, free practice of religion, women's rights and gay rights.

All citizens of Israel have full voting rights without regard to race, sex, or ethnicity.

And, Israel's parliament, the Knesset, includes Jews and Arabs alike as members.

Israel is a small country in a hostile environment that has found a way to accomplish big things.

We as Americans are better off today because of Israel's existence.

And, as I wish Israel and her citizens a happy 65th birthday, I stress that I will continue working with my colleagues to support our closest friend and ally, as it continues to inspire the world with its achievement.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, tonight many of my colleagues will be participating in a special order in observance of Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day.

I want to join them in celebration and wish the Israeli people a very happy and blessed 65 years of independence.

The road traveled by the people of Israel required extraordinary and unimaginable sacrifice.

And still this struggle continues every day for Jewish people in countries across the world.

I am proud to stand with Israel and continue our nation's support of democracy and peace in the Middle East.

A personal hero of mine, President Truman, bonded our countries together when he made the United States the first nation to recognize the State of Israel.

Since that time we've worked together to promote peace in the region and stand up to threats and acts of aggression.

Today Israel faces new challenges and uncertainty. But by acting together the United States and Israel can—and will—overcome.

Again, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to Israel on its 65th year of independence, and my hope that we will continue to strive towards a stable and peaceful Middle East and North Africa.

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate America's great friend and ally, Israel, and the people of Israel, on the 65th anniversary of their independence.

Mr. Speaker, as a student, in the 1980's, I was incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to travel to Israel. I learned a lot from that journey. There are few places I have been to in my life as vibrant and dynamic as that nation. I was impressed, as I think most visitors are, by the great optimism and resilience of the Israeli people—optimism and resilience that they showed even during a time of extreme uncertainty.

And I was also struck by how small, and how vulnerable, Israel is geographically. On a clear day, you can stand on top of the Golan Heights and see from one end of the country to another. Right before your eyes, you can see the fragility of the country's security—whose defense is a great credit to the Israeli people.

Right before your eyes, you see a strong, but geographically small country, a country not protected by oceans, a country with many hostile neighbors, a country that has been bravely defending itself from terrorist and military attacks repeatedly since its independence.

My visit to Israel dramatically increased my appreciation for Israel and helped define my own views about the importance of their security and our nation's special relationship with Israel. Our shared national interests and our shared values of democracy, peace, and liberty have defined that relationship for 65 years now and will continue to define that relationship into the future.

I'm proud to join my colleagues of both parties in expressing a renewed commitment to that special relationship and to Israel's security, in honoring Israel's history, in expressing our best wishes for Israel's continued accomplishments, and in offering our congratulations to the Israeli people on this significant anniversary.

Congratulations to our dear friends in Israel on the 65th anniversary of your nation's independence.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HONDA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business.

Ms. MOORE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of medical reasons.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today and the balance of the week on account of family business.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, April 16, 2013, 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:

1099. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Importation of Live Birds and Poultry, Poultry Meat, and Poultry Products From a Region in the European Union [Docket No: APHIS-2009-0094] (RIN: 0579-AD45) received April 2, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1100. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Styrene-Ethylene-Propylene Block Copolymer; Tolerance Exemption [EPA-HQ-OPP-2013-0043; FRL-9380-5] received April 5, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1101. A letter from the Acting Principal Deputy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's annual report for 2012 on the STARBASE Program, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2193b(g); to the Committee on Armed Services.

1102. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council, transmitting the Council's Annual Report for 2012; to the Committee on Financial Services.

1103. A letter from the Administrator, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Amendment to Rule Filing Requirements for Dually-Registered Clearing Agencies [Release No.: 34-69284; File No.: S7-29-11] (RIN: 3235-AL18) received April 8, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

1104. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Service of Process on Manufacturers; Manufacturers Importing Electronic Products Into the United States; Agent Designation; Change of Address [Docket No.: FDA-2007-N-0091] (formerly 2007N-0104) received April 2, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1105. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Medical Devices; Technical Amendment [Docket No.: FDA-2013-N-0011] received April 2, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1106. A letter from the Program Manager, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Medicaid Program; Increased Federal Medical Assistance Percentage Changes under the Affordable Care Act of 2010 [CMS-2327-FC] (RIN: 0938-AR38) received April 1, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1107. A letter from the Deputy Bureau, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Connect America Fund; High Cost Universal Service Support [WC Docket No.: 10-90] [WC Docket No.: 05-337] received April 2, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1108. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Notification of the intention to exercise the authority under Section 552(c)(2) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, to authorize the drawdown to the Syrian Opposition Coalition and the Supreme Military Council; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1109. A letter from the Director, Equal Employment Opportunity and Inclusion, Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's annual report for FY 2012 prepared in accordance with the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1110. A letter from the Chairman, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, transmitting the Commission's annual report for Fiscal Year 2012 prepared in accordance with Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Public Law 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1111. A letter from the Chair, Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board, transmitting the Board's annual report for FY 2012 prepared in accordance with Section 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Public Law 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1112. A letter from the Federal Liaison Officer, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes to Representation of Others Before The United States Patent and Trademark Office [Docket No.: PTO-C-2012-0034] (RIN: 0651-AC81) received April 2, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1113. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the 2012 Biennial Report on the Effectiveness of Grant Programs under the Violence Against Women Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1114. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Annual Report to Congress and the National Transportation Safety Board Responding to Issues on the National Transportation Safety Board's 2013 Most Wanted List; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1115. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting the Commission's 51st annual report of activities for fiscal year 2012; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

1116. A letter from the Director of Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Grants for Transportation of Veterans in Highly Rural Areas (RIN: 2900-AO01) received April 2, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

1117. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Appeals Settlement Guidelines — New York State Qualified Empire Zone Enterprise Credit Real Property Taxes received April 8, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

1118. A letter from the Chairman, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, transmitting the Board's Twenty-Third Annual Report to Congress on health and safety activities; jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Energy and Commerce.

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. ROGERS of Michigan: Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. H.R. 624. A bill to provide for the sharing of certain cyber threat intelligence and cyber threat information between the intelligence community and cybersecurity entities, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 113–39). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union,

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. PITTS (for himself, Mr. BURGESS, and Mrs. WAGNER):

H.R. 1549. A bill to amend Public Law 111-148 to transfer fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2016 funds from the Prevention and Public Health Fund to carry out the temporary high risk health insurance pool program for

individuals with preexisting conditions, and to extend access to such program to such individuals who have had creditable coverage during the 6 months prior to application for coverage through such program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. KILDEE (for himself and Mr. TURNER):

H.R. 1550. A bill to allow use of assistance under the Hardest Hit Fund program under the Troubled Assets Relief Program of the Department of the Treasury for demolition of foreclosed-upon properties and related expenses; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MEEKS (for himself, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. CLAY):

H.R. 1551. A bill to amend the Consumer Credit Protection Act to assure meaningful disclosures of the terms of rental-purchase agreements, including disclosures of all costs to consumers under such agreements, to provide certain substantive rights to consumers under such agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan:

H.R. 1552. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the transfer of required minimum distributions from a retirement plan to a health savings account; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. BARR, Ms. MOORE, Mr. ROSS, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. HURT, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. STIVERS, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. POSEY, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. DUFFY, and Mr. NEUGEBAUER):

H.R. 1553. A bill to improve the examination of depository institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. DOGGETT (for himself, Ms. BASS, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. CHU, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DINGELL, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FARR, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Ms. MOORE, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mr. RUSH, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. HOLT, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 1554. A bill to restrict the use of offshore tax havens and abusive tax shelters to inappropriately avoid Federal taxation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on 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. DOGGETT (for himself, Ms. BASS, Mr. BECERRA, Ms. CHU, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 1555. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce international tax avoidance and restore a level playing field for American businesses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DOGGETT (for himself, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. MORAN, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. RUSH, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 1556. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prevent corporations from exploiting tax treaties to evade taxation of United States income; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BRALEY of Iowa:

H.R. 1557. A bill to ensure clarity of regulations to improve the effectiveness of Federal regulatory programs while decreasing burdens on the regulated public; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on 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 Mr. COLLINS of New York:

H.R. 1558. A bill to lower health premiums and increase choice for small businesses; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on 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 Ms. GABBARD (for herself and Ms. HANABUSA):

H.R. 1559. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide health care practitioners in rural areas with training in preventive health care, including both physical and mental care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GARCIA (for himself, Mr. RADEL, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN):

H.R. 1560. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to authorize the Internal Revenue Service to permit truncated social security numbers on wage reporting provided to employees; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GARDNER:

H.R. 1561. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to make improvements to support facilities for National Historic Sites operated by the National Park Service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. GIBSON (for himself, Mr. REED, Mr. OWENS, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York):

H.R. 1562. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to simplify the petitioning procedure for H-2A workers, to expand the scope of the H-2A program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GUTHRIE (for himself and Ms. CASTOR of Florida):

H.R. 1563. A bill to enable concrete masonry products manufacturers to establish, finance, and carry out a coordinated program of research, education, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for concrete masonry products; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HURT (for himself and Mr. MEEKS):

H.R. 1564. A bill to amend the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 to prohibit the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board from requiring public companies to use specific auditors or require the use of different auditors on a rotating basis; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. MEEHAN, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H.R. 1565. A bill to protect Second Amendment rights, ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, and provide a responsible and consistent background check process; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on 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. LUETKEMEYER (for himself and Mr. MEEKS):

H.R. 1566. A bill to create a Federal charter for Internet consumer credit corporations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MULVANEY (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. AMASH, Mr. MEADOWS, and Mr. SALMON):

H.R. 1567. A bill to eliminate corporate welfare programs of the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Transportation, and other Federal agencies; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Financial Services, 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. NADLER (for himself, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mr. ISRAEL):

H.R. 1568. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for adjustments in the individual income tax rates to reflect regional differences in the cost-of-living; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. POMPEO (for himself, Mr. AMASH, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. MEADOWS, and Mr. PRICE of Georgia):

H.R. 1569. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to terminate certain energy tax subsidies and lower the corporate income tax rate; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. RICHMOND:

H.R. 1570. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for the regulation of tax return preparers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SCALISE (for himself, Mr. YODER, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. FLORES, Mr. PITTS, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. PERRY, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. YOHO, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. MESSER, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. ROKITA, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Mrs. HARTZLER):

H.R. 1571. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for taxpayers

making donations with their returns of income tax to the Federal Government to pay down the public debt; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SCHOCK:

H.R. 1572. A bill to prohibit the use of Federal money for print, radio, television or any other media advertisement, campaign, or form of publicity against the use of a food or beverage that is lawfully marketed under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SIRES (for himself, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. HONDA, Mr. PETRI, and Mr. KENNEDY):

H.R. 1573. A bill to amend the Peace Corps Act to allow former volunteers to use the seal, emblem, or name of Peace Corps on death announcements and grave stones; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. TURNER:

H.R. 1574. A bill to amend the Dayton Aviation Heritage Preservation Act of 1992 to rename a site of the park; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. YODER (for himself, Mr. POMPEO, Ms. JENKINS, and Mr. CLEAVER):

H.R. 1575. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require a provider of a commercial mobile service or an IP-enabled voice service to provide call location information concerning the user of such a service to law enforcement agencies in order to respond to a call for emergency services or in an emergency situation that involves risk of death or serious physical harm; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. NEUGEBAUER:

H.J. Res. 39. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RUNYAN (for himself and Mr. SCHNEIDER):

H. Con. Res. 31. Concurrent resolution supporting Rare Pituitary Disease Awareness; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mr. FLORES, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. HANNA, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. BARBER, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. HIMES, Mr. POLIS, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. TERRY, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. YODER, and Mr. LANCE):

H. Res. 160. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require authorizing committees to hold annual hearings on GAO investigative reports on the identification, consolidation, and elimination of duplicative Government programs; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky (for himself, Mr. KEATING, Mr. WOLF, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. TIERNEY, and Mr. ADERHOLT):

H. Res. 161. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Food and Drug Administration should encourage the use of abuse-deterrent formulations of drugs; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

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. PITTS:

H.R. 1549.

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, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KILDEE:

H.R. 1550.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. MEEKS:

H.R. 1551.

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 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of United States Constitution.

By Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan:

H.R. 1552.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mrs. CAPITO:

H.R. 1553.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Commerce Clause, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution states that Congress shall have power to regulate the regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. DOGGETT:

H.R. 1554.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. DOGGETT:

H.R. 1555.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution and Amendment XVI of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. DOGGETT:

H.R. 1556.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution and Amendment XVI of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BRALEY of Iowa:

H.R. 1557.

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, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. COLLINS of New York:

H.R. 1558.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill makes specific changes to existing law in a manner that returns power to the States and to the People, consistent with Amendment X of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. GABBARD:

H.R. 1559.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The U.S. Constitution including Article 1, Section 8.

By Mr. GARCIA:

H.R. 1560.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1, Section 8 of Article 1 of the United States Constitution, which reads: ''The Congress shall have 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; but all Duties and Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.''

Clause 18, Section 8, Article 1 of the United States Constitution, which reads: ''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 the Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. GARDNER:

H.R. 1561.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

By Mr. GIBSON:

H.R. 1562.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 and 4, of Section 8, of Article I.

By Mr. GUTHRIE:

H.R. 1563.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

By Mr. HURT:

H.R. 1564.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Mr. KING of New York:

H.R. 1565.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 6

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.

By Mr. LUETKEMEYER:

H.R. 1566.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the explicit power of Congress to regulate commerce in and among the states, as enumerate in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3, the Commerce Clause, of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MULVANEY:

H.R. 1567.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1. ''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.''

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 this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. NADLER:

H.R. 1568.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Art. 1, sec. 8, cl. 1 ''Congress shall have the Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises. . . .''

Art. 1, sec. 8, cl. 18 Necessary and proper clause.

By Mr. POMPEO:

H.R. 1569.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. RICHMOND:
H.R. 1570.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The Constitutional authority for this bill stems from Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution and Amendment XVI of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. SCALISE:
H.R. 1571.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution
By Mr. SCHOCK:
H.R. 1572.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress as stated in Article I, Section 9, Clause 7 and Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.
By Mr. SIRES:
H.R. 1573.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution
By Mr. TURNER:
H.R. 1574.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18; and Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States.
By Mr. YODER:
H.R. 1575.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 3,
The Congress shall have power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;
To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;
By Mr. NEUGEBAUER:
H.J. Res. 39.
Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:
Article I, Section 8, Clause 1
The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 3: Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, and Mr. THORNBERRY.
H.R. 32: Ms. ESTY and Mr. LUCAS.
H.R. 38: Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. GUTHRIE, and Mr. CALVERT.
H.R. 124: Mr. KLINE and Mr. COBLE.
H.R. 125: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.
H.R. 129: Ms. SPEIER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 135: Mr. BERA of California.
H.R. 136: Mr. BERA of California.
H.R. 139: Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 200: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 207: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. GIBBS.
H.R. 208: Ms. LEE of California.
H.R. 236: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 279: Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 318: Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia.
H.R. 324: Mr. KENNEDY.
H.R. 333: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 351: Mr. WHITFIELD and Mr. RICE of South Carolina.
H.R. 377: Mr. NEAL and Mr. SABLAN.
H.R. 503: Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 556: Mr. LABRADOR and Mr. NEUGEBAUER.
H.R. 569: Mrs. WALORSKI.
H.R. 570: Mr. COURTNEY.
H.R. 624: Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. UPTON, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. NUNES, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. PETERS of California, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. LANCE, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. MCHENRY, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. KLINE, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Mr. CAMP, Mr. COLE, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. COSTA, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. KILMER, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. ENYART, Mr. GUTIERREZ, and Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 627: Mr. HONDA, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. LUCAS, and Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 629: Mr. HORSFORD.
H.R. 630: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia and Mr. CASTRO of Texas.
H.R. 655: Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 666: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 671: Mr. BISHOP of New York and Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 719: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska and Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 721: Mrs. NOEM.
H.R. 724: Mr. KILMER, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.
H.R. 730: Mr. SENSENBRENNER and Mr. BARR.
H.R. 755: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY AND Mr. COOK.
H.R. 786: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 792: Mr. MCHENRY.
H.R. 798: Ms. TITUS and Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 800: Mr. NUGENT and Mrs. ELLMERS.
H.R. 826: Mr. COOPER.
H.R. 850: Mr. GARCIA, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. COHEN, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. HARPER, and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 851: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 920: Mr. TIBERI and Mr. LUCAS.
H.R. 924: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 940: Mr. DUFFY.
H.R. 956: Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. RICHMOND, and Mr. PERLMUTTER.
H.R. 961: Mr. THOMPSON of California and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 962: Ms. LOFGREN and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 984: Mrs. BLACKBURN.
H.R. 1012: Mr. NADLER, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 1020: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. AMODEI, and Mr. COLE.
H.R. 1024: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 1026: Mr. STOCKMAN, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, and Mr. CONAWAY.
H.R. 1038: Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 1076: Mr. COTTON.
H.R. 1100: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 1148: Mr. WITTMAN and Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 1151: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H.R. 1181: Mr. COBLE.
H.R. 1201: Mr. LATHAM and Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 1211: Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 1229: Ms. LEE of California, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Ms. CLARKE.
H.R. 1242: Mr. LABRADOR and Mr. BENTIVOLIO.
H.R. 1250: Ms. LEE of California.
H.R. 1252: Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 1263: Mr. RUNYAN and Mr. BARBER.
H.R. 1265: Mr. VARGAS and Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD.
H.R. 1281: Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.
H.R. 1289: Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 1322: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 1330: Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 1344: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. HAHN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Mr. GRIMM.
H.R. 1371: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
H.R. 1386: Mr. GIBBS, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. MULVANEY, and Mr. PEARCE.
H.R. 1414: Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. TIERNEY, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 1416: Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. YODER, Mr. RADEL, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. JONES, Mr. COBLE, Mr. CARTER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. GIBBS, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. ROONEY, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee.
H.R. 1417: Mr. HUDSON and Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 1460: Mrs. WAGNER.
H.R. 1466: Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. NADLER, Ms. BROWN of Florida, and Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 1478: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 1502: Mr. BACHUS, Mr. BRADY of Texas, and Mr. ROSKAM.
H.R. 1507: Mr. RAHALL, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. SIRES, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 1509: Mr. DOYLE.
H.R. 1532: Mr. HUFFMAN.
H.R. 1547: Mr. SCHRADER, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. MULVANEY, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.J. Res. 31: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H. Con. Res. 23: Mr. KINGSTON.
H. Con. Res. 24: Mr. COBLE and Mr. COLE.
H. Con. Res. 26: Mr. FORBES.
H. Con. Res. 30: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mr. YOHO, Mr. HALL, Mr. ENYART, Mr. POLIS, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. YODER, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. RUNYAN, Mr. BACHUS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. SPEIER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. SALMON, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. OLSON, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. MARINO, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. LATTA, and Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H. Res. 30: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
H. Res. 36: Mr. CRAWFORD and Mr. WENSTRUP.
H. Res. 75: Mr. BENTIVOLIO.
H. Res. 78: Ms. LOFGREN.

H. Res. 90: Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. WATERS, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. DOYLE.

H. Res. 101: Mr. MARINO.

H. Res. 102: Mr. MCINTYRE and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.

H. Res. 108: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.

H. Res. 112: Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. WALZ, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee.

H. Res. 118: Mr. FOSTER, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, and Mr. TIERNEY.

H. Res. 124: Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. CLARKE, and Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 1101: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2013 No. 50

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, inspire us to treat others as we want them to treat us. Let us rejoice in their strengths, and let us be patient with their weaknesses.

As our Senators do the work of freedom today, may they be sustained by Your love. Remind them that Your Divine affection has given them everything they need for life and liberty. Answer them when they cry out to You and tell them great and unsearchable things they do not know. Give them the humility to understand that none of us has a monopoly on Your truth and that we all need each other to discover Your guidance together.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 o'clock this afternoon. During that period of time, each Senator will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each, if they wish.

At 5 p.m. the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Beverly Reid O'Connell to be a district judge for the Central District of California.

At 5:30 p.m. there will be a rollcall vote on confirmation of the O'Connell nomination.

PREVENTING GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the debate over the best way to prevent gun violence in America raises strong emotions. Second amendment advocates—me among them—want to preserve and protect the right of every law-abiding citizen to bear arms. Victims of gun violence and family members of those killed by guns—me among them—want to ensure that guns are kept from the hands of criminals and those with mental illnesses severe in nature. These are both worthy goals, and they should not be mutually exclusive goals.

It is possible to uphold the second amendment while protecting innocent Americans from gun violence. Of course it is. The compromise background check proposal before the Senate—a measure crafted by Senators TOOMEY, MANCHIN, KIRK, and SCHUMER—achieves both goals. This bipartisan measure would keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals by requiring background checks for private gun sales at gun shows and over the Internet.

It strengthens the existing instant check system by encouraging States to put all their criminal and mental health records into the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, a step supported by gun rights groups. And it would establish a National Commission on Mass Violence to study all causes of mass violence in our country. School safety, mental health, video games—whatever is appropriate should be looked into.

This legislation has the backing of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms. It has 650,000 members. It is the second largest gun rights group in the Nation.

On this proposal—background checks—the National Rifle Association is not being very talkative. Why? Because they have supported this measure in the past. And while they are not publicly supporting it now, they have done it in the past.

This measure has the support of antigun violence advocates such as Mayors Against Illegal Guns, consisting of hundreds of mayors around the country. It has the support of law enforcement groups, such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Although this compromise does not go as far to expand background checks as some had hoped, the nature of compromise is what it is. That is what legislation is all about. It is not perfect, but it certainly is a long, big, heavy step forward.

Expanding background checks to cover gun shows and Internet sales is common sense. It will help protect the innocent from gun violence. And it will also protect firearms sellers. No responsible firearms dealer wants to unwittingly put a gun in the hands of a murderer.

One need only ask a man by the name of Bruce Daly. Mr. Daly sold the shotgun that was used in a shooting rampage at the Lloyd D. George Federal Courthouse in Las Vegas a few years ago.

Seventy-two-year-old security guard and retired police officer Stanley Cooper was murdered by a felon who bought a gun at a gun show in Kingman, AZ—90 miles from Las Vegas. I repeat, the shooter was a convicted felon, who had no right to own a gun and could never have passed a background check. But because Mr. Daly sold the shotgun at a gun show in Arizona, he never had to perform a background check.

After the shooting at the Las Vegas courthouse, Mr. Daly was found to have an expired Federal permit for selling weapons, and because of that he

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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was convicted. But Mr. Daly, admirably, has stepped forward. He admits to having sold dozens of guns that were linked to violent crimes. I repeat, today Mr. Daly, admirably, wishes he had done more to keep the guns he sold out of the hands of criminals, and he has stated many times that expanded background checks are the best way to do that.

Most gun owners—and most gun dealers—are responsible, law-abiding people. They love and respect firearms. They are sportsmen who hunt. They may take their weapons when they go fishing. These are people who enjoy target shooting, who no longer hunt, but they like to go out and plunk or they like to go to a range and shoot. They are citizens who simply want to protect themselves, their homes, and their families.

A better background check law will not infringe on second amendment rights in any way. But it will prevent the small minority of people who want to obtain guns for the wrong reasons from buying these weapons. And it will stop troubled people who, because of an illness beyond their control, would be a danger to themselves or to others if they possessed a firearm.

This compromise legislation should not be controversial. Nine out of 10 Americans—including a majority, a vast majority, of gun owners and 75 percent of NRA members—support stronger background check laws. This is not the background check law that was reported out of the committee that is in the underlying bill. But MANCHIN, TOOMEY, KIRK, and SCHUMER think they can improve that, and that is what this amendment is all about.

A number of my colleagues oppose this measure. I am sure that is the case. It is their right to vote against it. We continue to work—I continue to work—toward an agreement to vote on this compromise and to consider other amendments. We need to do that. Democrats are not going to offer all the amendments. Republicans want to offer amendments. They feel the law in the country today is too weak. In their minds, they want to make it weaker but they think that is a strength. Most people, a majority of us, would disagree, but they have a right to do that.

I hope there are not going to be a few unreasonable extremists who are going to try to prevent an up-or-down vote on legislation in this bill. We should not have a filibuster on this legislation. I, of course, can always file cloture. I hope we do not have to do that. That would be a shameful tribute to the memory of 27 people who died in Newtown: little boys and girls—in the minds of many, babies—and school teachers, administrators who were killed; 27 of them.

Newtown deserves a vote, and so do the mothers and fathers, loved ones and friends, of the 3,300 victims of gun violence in America since that terrible day at Sandy Hook. Mr. President, 3,300 people have died because of gunshots since Sandy Hook.

Don't we have an obligation to the American people to do some correcting of what is not right in this country? I believe so.

Mr. President, I know the chairman of the committee, who has worked hard to get this matter before us, is here. He also has an amendment. I hope we can get to his amendment, which I wish to do next; and that is an amendment that I am told is even supported by the National Rifle Association to improve what is in this bill that was reported out of the committee dealing with Federal trafficking.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAINE). The Senator from Vermont.

GUN TRAFFICKING

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I tell the Senator from Nevada, we have been working very hard on that. It has bipartisan support. It had a bipartisan vote out of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

We had been working on it with the National Rifle Association and a lot of others because this trafficking allows somebody who can legitimately buy weapons to go in and buy them and then sell them to people who are from a drug cartel in this country or others or to a gang member—people who could not have bought them legitimately. It is a huge loophole.

We saw the same loophole in the murder of the head of the Colorado prison system. The man who we understand shot him would have been prohibited from buying a weapon, but somebody who could buy one bought it and passed it on to him.

I want to thank Senators MANCHIN and TOOMEY for coming forward with their bipartisan amendment to close the gun show loophole and prevent criminals from obtaining firearms, while at the same time respecting and protecting the second amendment rights of responsible gun owners. These Senators have worked long and hard. They have studied the issue. They have compromised, and they have reached an agreement that I intend to support and I hope the Senate will adopt.

The Senator from Nevada certainly hopes Senators will vote and not filibuster. The American people I think would consider it a disgrace if Senators were unwilling to stand and vote either yes or no. A filibuster means you vote maybe. I would hope, with only 100 of us to represent 314 million Americans, we would at least have the courage to vote yes or vote no. It may not be a popular vote either way you vote, but voting maybe—which is what a filibuster is—shows no respect for the Senate and shows no courage.

We have had background checks for decades. They are an accepted part of the process of buying a gun. I am among millions of responsible gun owners who have undergone a background check as part of this process. And as I tell our gun dealers in Vermont when I buy a gun there, I am like millions of responsible gun owners. I understand this check is necessary and I have no problem going through it. But I expect everybody else to go through it because it keeps guns out of the hands of criminals and those who are a danger to themselves and others due to mental illness.

Background checks work. Since 1998, over 2 million sales to prohibited people have been prevented thanks to background checks. That is 2 million times a potentially dangerous person trying to get a gun was denied a gun.

Now some argue that background checks do not work because not enough people who fail the background check are later prosecuted. Failing a background check is not in itself a crime. Indeed, the main purpose of the background check is to prevent a prohibited person from getting the desired gun. Although not foolproof, the background check system we have had in place has succeeded in preventing dangerous people from getting guns over 2 million times. What we are now trying to do is improve the background check system. That is what the Manchin-Toomey amendment is trying to do. We all know there is a huge, huge loophole in that background check system. Criminals and other prohibited people who could not go in to a legitimate gun store in the Presiding Officer's State or my State can get around this by going to nonlicensed dealers at gun shows.

I know gun store owners in Vermont. They follow the law and conduct background checks. They wonder why others who sell guns do not have to follow these same rules. I agree with these responsible business owners. Just as I go through a background check when I buy a gun, I want everybody to have to go through it and not be able to use the loophole.

I have been voting to close this loophole for years. In 1999, when the Senate adopted an amendment to close the gun show loophole, we passed that provision after the tragedy at Columbine. Regrettably, the House would not pass the bill. Republican leadership at the time let the matter drop. I hope this time the House will join us to close the loophole once and for all.

The Manchin-Toomey bipartisan amendment closes the loophole in a way that does not infringe upon second amendment rights. Sales at gun shows, sales using online or print advertising will be governed by the same kind of requirements that a gun store owner in Vermont or Virginia or anywhere else has to follow. It is going to make us safer. It will not confiscate anyone's guns. It will not create a government registry. It does not undermine the second amendment. No court has held that background checks, which have been with us for decades, violate the second amendment. Indeed, when the U.S. Supreme Court expressly held that the second amendment provides an individual right in the Heller case, it also said that ''longstanding provisions on the possession of firearms by felons and

the mentally ill'' do not violate the second amendment.

The compromise these Senators have presented to us is focused on gun shows and commercial sales. It does not require background checks for sales between spouses or siblings or parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, and cousins. It does not require background checks for a transfer between friends and neighbors who talk to each other and decide to sell or give each other a firearm.

The bill does not require background checks for temporary transfers of guns for hunting or target shooting. But it does require background checks for the kind of sales that can be easily exploited by people who intend to do harm: sales at gun shows and through online and print advertisement.

I would hope Senators would agree with 90 percent of the people in this country: We need a strong background check system in order to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals. Why not try to plug the loopholes in the law that allow dangerous criminals to buy guns without background checks? It is a matter of common sense. If we agree that the background check system makes sense, why not make it more effective? What responsible gun owner objects to improving the background check system?

I come from a State with a lot of gun owners, myself included. I have not heard a single gun owner say, we should not have a background check apply to everybody just as it applies to them.

At the first of our Judiciary Committee hearings of the year, the first of three hearings on gun violence proposals, I pointed out that Wayne LaPierre of the NRA testified in 1999 in favor of mandatory criminal background checks for every sale at every gun show. He emphasized at that time the NRA supported closing loopholes in the background system by saying, ''No loopholes anywhere for anyone.''

It is common sense. That is what we voted to do in 1999 and we should again, and this time we should get it enacted. I have said over and over again, do not filibuster or sloganeer. Vote. Vote yes; vote no. Do not vote maybe. No one is going to take away our second amendment rights. They are not at risk. But lives are at risk where responsible people fail to stand up for laws that will keep guns out of the hands of those who use them to commit crimes of violence.

This is something we can come together and do to make America safer and more secure. Some have expressed frustration about the level of prosecutions under existing gun laws. And some have suggested that instead of making sensible changes to our public safety laws to prevent gun violence, Federal law enforcement officials should focus exclusively on existing laws. I share some of that frustration, but I do not agree it is a valid excuse for us to do nothing. Improvements in the enforcement of existing laws and efforts to give law enforcement officials better tools to do their jobs are not mutually exclusive; those efforts complement each other. A recent article in the Washington Times, certainly not considered a liberal paper, documented the gun prosecutions were in decline beginning in the Bush administration. They suggested having a Senate-confirmed Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives would significantly help law enforcement. We need to get such a director. But let's not be distracted from what we can do to keep Americans safe by partisan attacks on this administration or the last administration.

I also want to thank Senator SCHUMER for all his efforts to bring us to this point. I worked with him to make sure the legislation considered and voted on in the Judiciary Committee included a provision to improve the background checks system. He introduced a number of background check proposals. He reached across the aisle to try very hard to come to an agreement with Senator COBURN. His efforts helped pave the way for the agreement that Senator MANCHIN and Senator TOOMEY were able to reach.

I have also been encouraging the junior Senator from West Virginia in his efforts. He has shown great leadership, sensitivity and perseverance. I commend Senator TOOMEY for his willingness to join in this legislative effort. Together they have done the Senate and the country a great service. At the outset of the Judiciary Committee's consideration of this issue, I encouraged Senators to bring forward their ideas, to debate that which they thought could make a difference, not just obstruct that which they opposed. I hope those who oppose the measure put forward by Senators MANCHIN and TOOMEY will seek to be part of this debate rather than simply try to silence it.

Improving the background check system is a matter of common sense. Senators MANCHIN and TOOMEY have shown that it can be accomplished in a way that better protects our communities and fully respects our Second Amendment rights. I am pleased to support this bipartisan solution.

Now, will everybody agree on this legislation? Perhaps not. But at least have the courage to vote yes or no. Vote yes or no. If you are going to vote maybe, that is voting for a filibuster. The American people want a little bit of courage on the part of 100 Senators.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted in speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes.

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, in Shakespeare's ''Julius Caesar,'' a soothsayer warned Caesar to ''beware the Ides of March.'' For most Americans, however, the Ides of March passes without incident. It is the Ides of April—April 15, tax day—that so many Americans dread. The last few days must have been a big bonanza for the headache medicine industry. Taxes are due tonight at midnight.

Millions of Americans spent their weekend struggling to use tax software that crashed, flailing about to locate receipts, and wading through hundreds of pages of tax instructions. Instead of enjoying the outdoors or spending time with family and friends, too many Americans spent this past weekend hunched over their kitchen tables or in front of their computers surrounded by a maze of receipts, canceled checks, forms, and other paperwork as they undertook the annual water torture ritual of preparing tax returns.

This is the tax instruction booklet for our personal taxes, our 1040 form. It goes on and on, well over 200 pages. The first 104 pages of instructions are the basic form 1040. The further 110 pages of instructions are for the most common schedules to the 1040. There has got to be a better way.

Some day I hope Democrats and Republicans can come to the floor of this body, ask unanimous consent that this goes into the trash, and instead we substitute a much simpler way for our people to do their taxes. The reality is the Tax Code is too complex, too costly, and simply takes too much time to comply with. It is a code that is hopelessly out of date, mind-numbingly complex, increasingly unfair, and extraordinarily inefficient.

As a result, one of our most consequential economic policies, our tax law, does far more to stifle economic growth than to encourage it. Our country needs a comprehensive overhaul of our system of raising revenue and a modern Tax Code that is simpler, fairer, and simply more efficient. In sum, what is needed is a progrowth economic tax policy. If history is any guide, particularly when former President Reagan and a big group of Democrats got together, it can bolster American families and increase revenue without raising rates.

I have been something of a broken record on this issue for some time. But on a day such as this, particularly given what our people went through over the past weekend, I think it is time we spend a few minutes to talk

about how important it is to bring some common sense to American tax law. What is particularly striking is that I think the Congress understands what needs to be done. This is a question of political will now. There have been all kinds of blue-ribbon reports from the Bush administration, the Obama administration. I think what needs to be done is widely understood.

The pipes in the Tax Code are clogged with provisions that encourage rent-seeking behavior, lead to the misallocation of capital, and warp the American economy. What needs to be done is go in there and drain the swamp and clean out the Tax Code. It contains almost 4 million words. In the last decade alone, more than 130 laws have been enacted that yielded almost 4,500 changes to the Tax Code. That amounts to more than one change to the Tax Code each and every day, year in and year out.

It has become so complicated that almost 90 percent of taxpayers either hire a tax preparer or use tax preparation software to complete returns. The IRS reports that the average estimated time burden for all taxpayers filing a Form 1040, a 1040A, a 1040EZ, is 13 hours, with an average cost of $210. With respect to these forms, nonbusiness taxpayers face an average burden of about 8 hours, a full day's work, while business taxpayers face an average burden of about 23 hours, nearly 3 days of work.

In 2011, the Small Business Administration found that among businesses with 20 or fewer employees, tax compliance cost $1,584 per employee. In addition to the escalating cost of compliance with this code, cost, both time and money, the complexity of the code, in my view, has obscured the typical person's ability to understand it and has undercut voluntary compliance, which is, of course, the bedrock principle of our tax law.

With the ongoing debate about how to reduce the budget deficit, the Tax Code's complexity serves also to perpetuate what is known as the tax gap; that is, the difference between what taxpayers pay and what is owed under the law. The most recent Internal Revenue Service estimate for the tax gap is $385 billion. Based on statistical trends, the likely gap for this year is going to exceed $420 billion. This is an underpayment of approximately 14 percent.

My gut tells me—I serve on both the Finance Committee and the Joint Committee on Taxation—that some of this gap certainly is due to conscious tax evasion, but I also believe a significant portion of it is attributable to inadvertent mistakes in filing, many of which stem from the complexity of the code. Well-coordinated, thoughtful, comprehensive reform is going to reduce the need for many complex provisions that limit the ability of taxpayers to benefit from certain deductions, credits, exemptions, and exclusions. Comprehensive tax reform must eliminate the multiple provisions that require taxpayers to calculate their liability multiple times, such as the alternative minimum tax. Talk about bureaucratic water torture. All this weekend across the country we had middle-class folks essentially doing their taxes twice as a result of the minimum tax. The personal exemption phaseout, PEP, and the phaseout of itemized deductions, Pease, isn't much easier.

I would show this poster which demonstrates 11 tax forms. These are forms, colleagues, the typical filer must fill out every year or, if they can afford it, pay someone to fill them out. Is it really necessary to run this full-time, hand-cramping program for our citizens to have to wade through all of this?

We also have another alternative, a one-page 1040 form which I have worked on with colleagues for years. It is only about 29 lines long. Some industrious reporters took this particular tax form and found a typical citizen—this was worked on by Democrats and Republicans—may fill out their taxes with this form in under an hour.

To illustrate how complicated the code has become, let me refer briefly to capital gains. The income tax currently imposes at least nine different effective tax rates on capital gains, depending on the taxpayer's regular rate, how long an asset was owned, the type of asset, and whether the taxpayer owes the alternative minimum tax. For this the IRS provides three different worksheets, one with 37 lines, to help taxpayers calculate their tax on capital gains.

Comprehensive reform should make things easier for taxpayers by allowing a percentage exclusion for long-term gains and reapplying regular tax rates to the rest. This simple change, to have an exclusion for a measure of capital gains which have been earned and then a progressive rate structure from this point on, would sharply reduce the complexity of returns while maintaining fairness and opportunities for all our people to invest.

Further complicating matters, a number of commonly used terms in the Tax Code: qualifying child, modified adjusted gross income, and more, have multiple definitions depending on the provision. Certainly, Democrats and Republicans should agree uniform definitions for the most commonly used terms are something which shouldn't be a bipartisan issue. More than 40 definitions of small business exist in the Tax Code alone.

There are certainly policy reasons to provide tax benefits to families with children. The definition of a child differs widely across the Tax Code.

Children under 19 count in defining the earned-income tax credit benefits. Those under 17 qualify for the child credit, and only those under 13 are eligible for the child and dependent care credit. Maybe these differences result from deliberate congressional actions about who ought to receive tax benefits, but I think they needlessly complicate tax filing and certainly lead to inadvertent errors which the Internal Revenue Service then attempts to figure out how to correct.

Other factors used to define qualifying children further complicate the situation, including the child's physical residence, custody arrangements, and who pays the child's living expenses. Establishing a single definition to determine whether taxpayers may claim tax benefits for children would simplify both tax filing and IRS processing of returns.

The list only goes on and on, such as the earned-income tax credit, something vital to low-income families, and a whole host of different workshops. The educational credits are, again, another example where families with students in college qualifying for multiple tax benefits to defray educational expenses often may claim only one of them. For example, a family may be able to claim either the Hope credit or the Lifetime Learning Credit, but not both for the same student.

If the family has more than one student it may claim one credit for one student and the other for a second student. Determining which alternative is best requires multiple calculations and may conflict with the use of other tax benefits for education such as Coverdale savings accounts and 529 savings plans. Comprehensive tax reform would, at the very minimum, coordinate these educational benefits to make it easier for families to determine eligibility.

How complicated have things become? A few years ago Treasury's Inspector General for Tax Administration sent staff to pose as taxpayers at 12 commercial preparer chains and 16 small independent preparers. Of the 28 tax returns the professionals prepared, 17 had mistakes. All of the business returns were wrong. Let me repeat that. All of the business returns were wrong when professionals had prepared them.

In 2006 the same sort of drill was undertaken. Again, the Government Accountability Office found professional preparers made mistakes. They mishandled those bread-and-butter kinds of issues, such as the earned-income tax credit and the childcare credit. They even got it wrong whether the taxpayer should even itemize his or her deductions.

The question is, If the pros can't figure out how to file taxes, isn't it clear, isn't it obvious to all of us the Tax Code needs to be purged and the special interest breaks cleaned out so rates can be held down for all? And we can agree on a simple tax philosophy. I can sum up mine in a sentence.

I believe we need a tax system which gives everybody in America the opportunity to get ahead. If you are successful, we want you to be successful. You will pay your fair share, but nothing in the Tax Code will make it impossible for you to be successful in the days

ahead. If you don't have much, we will have a Tax Code which is simple and understandable. When you work hard and play by the rules, you will have an opportunity to get ahead as well.

Comprehensive tax reform will make it easier to file. It is going to lay out an opportunity for the Senate Democrats, Republicans, and Independents to come together.

I close simply by saying once again, we saw in the past few days how broken and dysfunctional our tax system in America has become. Can you imagine what people thought when their software was crashing in the last couple of days? They are trying to find their receipts, flailing through filing cabinets trying to find those documents which attest to their taxable events for the past year. They can't know with certainty, based upon some of those analyses by the Government Accountability Office, whether they have done it right or even professionals have done it correctly.

Until this Senate comes together on a bipartisan basis to work for a simpler, more coherent tax system—one which promotes growth and eases the burden on American families and American businesses—there will be no relief from the Ides of April. This, in my view, is a tragedy worthy of Shakespeare.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask for such time as I may consume.

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

TAX DAY

Mrs. FISCHER. I rise today on Tax Day, the deadline for Americans to file Federal tax returns on their hard-earned income for the 2012 tax year. Benjamin Franklin famously said the only sure things in life are death and taxes. Today we Americans live up to that second hard truth, the day when the taxman comes.

For those of us in Congress, Tax Day serves as an important reminder of just who is funding all of the government's spending: it is the American taxpayer. Even as families across America have made tough decisions and tightened their household budgets, the Federal Government has gone on a spending spree. The government has posted four straight trillion-dollar deficits and is growing the national debt, which is approaching $17 trillion.

In recent years the average annual deficit has skyrocketed to 8.7 percent of our gross domestic product. These deficits should be all the evidence we need in order we get our fiscal house in order.

I believe, and Nebraskans believe, to generate economic growth we must first address our Nation's addiction to spending. We need to fix our broken tax system, and what better time than Tax Day to highlight this need?

Tax Day is a day to renew our efforts to simplify the tax system and ease the burden on hard-working Americans. The act of actually filing taxes is never pleasant, but it also allows Americans the chance to assess just how much of their income is going toward subsidizing an ever-growing bureaucracy.

Rather than make it easy for citizens to comply with the income tax requirements, the Federal Government has held onto an arcane, convoluted tax system. Many citizens, particularly small business owners, are forced to hire costly accountants or buy tax software just to sift through the 3,951,104 words of the Tax Code which, along with other rules and regulations, fills 73,608 pages of text, all in order to figure out just how much one owes.

Nebraskans shouldn't need to waste their time or pay for expensive financial advisers just to fork over more money to Uncle Sam. Americans collectively spend more than 6 billion hours preparing their tax returns. Imagine what more could be done if Americans could focus less time and resources on tax compliance.

According to the National Federation of Independent Businesses, 90 percent of small businesses have given up attempting to comply with the Tax Code. Instead, they pay a professional tax preparation service.

Through tax reform to make the Tax Code simpler and fairer, these small businesses could redirect scant resources currently used for tax compliance to focus more on growth and creating jobs.

I am encouraged, however, by the recent efforts toward much needed comprehensive tax reform to simplify our Tax Code. Just last week the chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator MAX BAUCUS, wrote an opinion piece in the Wall Street Journal with House Ways and Means Committee chairman DAVE CAMP highlighting their progress to date in pressing toward bipartisan tax reform.

President Obama has called for revenue-neutral corporate tax reform in his fiscal year 2014 budget. Unfortunately, the President's proposal is contingent on a $1.1 trillion tax increase above and beyond the $1.7 trillion in tax increases the President has already sought and won.

Such a tax hike sends the unmistakable message to every American taxpayer that the government knows how to spend their money better than they do. I believe American families know how best to spend their money, particularly during ongoing times of economic hardship when everyone is called upon to make tough decisions and to make those tough decisions about their budgets and about spending.

Revenue-neutral, progrowth tax reform should not only be geared toward the corporate side of our Tax Code, we should pursue revenue-neutral tax reforms on the individual side as well which would benefit American families as well as small businesses that pay those taxes at the individual level.

Small businesses generate two out of every three new jobs. Ninety-five percent of businesses, which employ nearly 70 million Americans, are organized in such a way that earnings are passed through the enterprise and therefore subject to taxation at the individual level. Tax day provides us with a needed reminder of how broken our Tax Code is. We can and should use it as the impetus to pursue progrowth tax reform. My goal for tax reform is simple—a fairer tax code that ensures that Nebraskans and our neighbors from across the country can keep more of the money they work hard to earn while providing for the core duties and responsibilities of our government.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

GUN SAFETY

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, we are about to enter into an incredibly important debate about a series of issues relating to violence—specifically, gun violence—in our communities all across America.

Today I rise to speak about a very important bipartisan amendment I will be offering with Senator ROY BLUNT and others called the Excellence in Mental Health Act. This addresses a very important piece of the discussion. It is an opportunity for us to come together amidst a lot of controversial debate and agree on something that is a very important piece of the puzzle—having access to comprehensive, quality mental health services.

This weekend we heard from Francine Wheeler, whose 6-year-old son Ben was murdered on December 14 in Newtown, CT. We know that Ben was one of 26 people—20 children—who lost their lives. I can only begin to imagine what all of us as parents would feel in that situation. For those 26 victims and the 3,300 other Americans killed since then in acts of gun violence, it is time to take action. I am hopeful, given the strong bipartisan vote we had to move forward on this debate, that we can actually have the debate, that people will have their say and then vote on this very important issue.

The bill before us is a commonsense effort toward comprehensive background checks that will help save lives. I am very supportive of not only that provision but others that will be offered as well.

One important piece that hasn't been in the headlines as much but is very important in getting it right is the need for better access to comprehensive mental health services. That is why we need the bipartisan Excellence in Mental Health Act passed as an amendment that will increase access to care and improve the quality of life for those who need it.

We know that a person who does not receive treatment after his or her first psychotic episode is 15 times more likely to commit a violent act. But let me

be clear. We also know that the vast majority of those who are living with mental illnesses are more likely to be a victim of crime than to be a perpetrator of crime. But tragedies do happen when treatment and help are not available.

In too many instances today we are seeing that there is not effective help available to people in communities. The current lack of access to mental health services means too often it is the local police who are responding to psychiatric emergencies, and they may not have services to which to take someone. These police officers are being diverted from what they should be doing—responding to other crimes—and so they take people to jail rather than have them get the services they need. They are spending resources incarcerating people who would otherwise need to be and should be in a treatment situation.

That is why we have law enforcement supporting this amendment. We have over 50 organizations—from law enforcement and community mental health and health groups, as well as those who represent our brave veterans home from the war—supporting us because they know that if we don't have quality service in the community, we will continue to see people in jail who shouldn't be in jail, we will continue to see families and individuals not getting the help they need, and in some circumstances we will see more tragedies occur as well.

Over the course of this week, we are going to hear a lot of debate about different aspects of gun safety. Colleagues are going to disagree about the manner of background checks or limits on assault weapons. But I hope there will be no disagreement that people with serious mental illnesses should be given effective treatment and that we can do a better job in our country to make sure treatment is readily available in a community setting. That should be the hopeful part of this whole debate.

Science has shown us significant advances in the study of the brain and the most effective mental health treatments. There are solutions if people get the help they need. They can live healthy, productive lives rather than struggling with their illness. And I applaud President Obama's historic brain mapping initiative to expand that knowledge even more.

It is amazing to me that we have so many studies relating to heart disease, kidney disease, or diabetes, and yet all of the issues relating to the brain—whether it is bipolar disorder or Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease or schizophrenia—we have not tackled with the same vigor. There are solutions. We are finding those every day. There is hope. Today, thanks to cutting-edge research, we have answers for people living with severe mental illnesses. We have proven therapies, treatment options, and medicines that truly transform lives.

I speak as someone who lived, as a daughter, through a time when we did not have appropriate treatments. When I was growing up, in middle school and high school, my father had bipolar disease. At that time we didn't know what it was. He was misdiagnosed for 10 years. At that time everybody was schizophrenic. There was no understanding that we actually have chemical imbalances in the brain, just as someone who isn't monitoring their sugar because they are diabetic might have. They need to monitor that in order to take medicine to keep them on an equilibrium so they do not get sick and have problems. We have the same thing with something called mood disorders in our country, and we have learned much about it. If someone is taking the right medicine, it stops the imbalance where they are either manic or severely depressed.

There are solutions. When my dad was finally diagnosed correctly and received the help he needed and the medicine—at the time it was lithium—he went on to lead a very productive life for the rest of his days. So I have seen both what happens when people don't get treatment and when people do, and we literally have the opportunity to take this next step in order to make sure people all across our country get the help they need.

Unfortunately, today one-third of all bipolar disorders do not get any treatment even when we know there are absolute answers for individuals and families. Shame on us for not making sure those are readily available. The amendment I will be offering would make sure those are available and close what I believe is the final step in what we have called mental health parity.

We, as a group, on a bipartisan basis passed legislation authored by our dear departed Paul Wellstone and Senator Pete Domenici, with strong advocacy from Senator Ted Kennedy, to provide parity under health insurance between physical and mental health services. We passed that. We have now gone on to strengthen that with the new health reforms that are in place. The only place where we don't have mental health parity right now is in the community outside of the insurance system. We do not have the same parity between what we do through a community health clinic receiving reimbursement for preventive care for health services and what we do for behavioral health—mental health, substance abuse—which is what we are going to fix with this amendment. We want to make sure we are focusing comprehensively in the community.

As part of this, I also wish to talk about another tragedy facing our country; that is, the loss of so many of our heroes from Iraq and Afghanistan. This is a very important part of this story and part of what our amendment will address in a very positive way. Men and women who survive the horrors of war are ending up taking their own lives when they come home. Twenty-two veterans a day commit suicide, 22 a day today, yesterday, and tomorrow. They and their families, all those in that situation, need to know there is help available for them. That is why we have very strong support from veterans, the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans organizations, which were very pleased to have stood with us last week when we did a press conference with veterans to focus on this important part of the puzzle.

We know that one in four veterans coming home needs some kind of mental health support, so we want to make sure that if they are in a rural community in northern Michigan and it is 3 or 4 hours to drive to the VA, they instead could receive some help in their own community—working with the VA but receiving help in their own community—and that is what this does. We want to make sure that our veterans are fully receiving the services promised them and that comprehensive health care will be available to them when they come home.

I would like to share just one story from our press conference.

Jennifer Crane joined us. She is a veteran of the war in Afghanistan. This October will mark 10 years since she returned home, but she says, ''The experiences live inside of me like it was yesterday.'' She suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. She couldn't sleep. She self-medicated and ended up homeless and in trouble with law enforcement. But when she got the help she needed at a community mental health center, it transformed her life. She met the man who would become her husband. She is now going to have a baby and now works with Give an Hour, which is a wonderful organization that helps veterans get the mental health services they need, and they are strongly supporting what we are doing as well.

Jennifer could have ended up a statistic, but she got the help she needed. We need to give every one of our heroes coming home from war the same opportunity. That is why the Excellence in Mental Health Act is so important as a part of all of this effort.

We have come a long way, in a bipartisan way, to recognize the need for mental health treatment. As I mentioned before, the wonderful partnership of Senators Domenici, Wellstone, and Kennedy paved the way for us to more fully understand that when we talk about comprehensive health services, we shouldn't stop at the neck—from the neck down, one set of rules; from the neck up, another set of rules—that, in fact, we are talking about comprehensive care. We need to make sure we lose that stigma and focus instead on what we can do to help people receive the services they need. This amendment takes those efforts across the finish line by expanding access to community mental health services.

I knew there would be a lot of controversial debate, but I hope in the end we will be able to come together, as we have on this amendment. I am very appreciative of the bipartisan support. I

want to thank Senator ROY BLUNT again on our Excellence in Mental Health Act, as well as Senator MARCO RUBIO, Senator SUSAN COLLINS, Senator LISA MURKOWSKI, and others who have expressed their support as well. This is an opportunity for us to come together, as we have in the past, and do the right thing for millions of families dealing with mental illnesses that are treatable. The good news is there is hope now. There are actually answers now to so many mental illnesses. By passing our bipartisan Excellence in Mental Health Act we can prevent tragedies from happening in families all over our country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, first, I commend and thank my colleague from Michigan, Senator STABENOW, for her leadership on an issue that is among the paramount questions for our time: whether we will meet our obligation to regard mental illness on a par with physical illness, a cause that has occupied me for a long time. So I want to thank the Senator from Michigan for spearheading this initiative, which is a vital part of the effort to stop gun violence in our country and, in fact, make our country healthy in so many ways. I am proud to join her as a cosponsor and a supporter of these efforts.

I come to the floor today to continue the debate on the gun violence initiatives which are central to making America safer and making our country stronger. This bill is a comprehensive set of provisions that will hopefully be further strengthened by an amendment to be offered this week. We are on the cusp of voting on that amendment, the work done by Senators TOOMEY and MANCHIN, our colleagues, to reach a reasonable compromise. It is indeed a sensible, commonsense compromise that I am proud to support that will guarantee a criminal background check system to keep firearms and weapons of war out of the hands of people who are dangerous, people who should not have guns, criminals, mentally ill, seriously mentally problem-stricken, and of course others, such as domestic abusers.

For too long, criminal individuals and organizations have prospered from illegally distributing weapons and firearms. So the bill in its second title takes a great step toward barring illegal trafficking and to also ban straw purchases.

Too often given short shrift or little attention is the third title which speaks to school safety, and that is the measure that brings me here today.

School safety is not an afterthought. It is central to stopping gun violence. The tragic lessons we have learned from Sandy Hook include not only the courage of the educators, those brave teachers and administrators and school psychologists, who literally threw themselves at bullets and cradled the loved ones of families who lost their lives, cradled children in their care as they were met by a hail of gunfire—that teaching moment should not only inspire us but obligate us to do more about school safety.

That is why I have gone to the schools of Connecticut, most recently on a tour that I conducted to ten schools around the State, to learn from our educators what they think those lessons are from Sandy Hook and where they think the priorities should be in terms of school safety. That experience provided me with some pillars of a program that I believe is important and is embodied in the act that is before us: the School and Campus Safety Enhancement Act. I want to thank Senator BOXER for her leadership on it which reauthorizes in effect the Secure Our Schools Program, which has been very productive and unfortunately was not reauthorized when it expired.

These measures and the pillars of this program can be summarized very simply:

First, decisions should be made locally about what best fits the community. Those decisions ought to be made by school districts and their boards, parents, teachers, administrators—all who are involved and have the knowledge and expertise and commitment locally, and Washington should not impose its judgment on those communities with a one-size-fits-all set of policies.

Second, school safety ideally should involve a partnership between educators and law enforcement. In many of the schools I visited, I saw the value of school resource officers. More importantly, educators pointed out to me the value of their partnership with local law enforcement through school resource officers who acted not only as security personnel but also as mentors, counselors, and role models, preventing crime, not just stopping it in progress or apprehending criminals afterwards.

Third, schools must be open, supportive, nurturing environments. They cannot be prisons. They cannot be transformed into permanent lockdown. We must commit ourselves to the freedoms and liberties that are embodied in our schools and the educative atmosphere that is so priceless and essential to real education. We cannot solve this problem by simply having more guns in schools, or arming teachers or administrators. Trained school resource officers or others provided with law enforcement support have to be part of a nurturing and open environment.

The act that is before us today embodied in title III is important to move forward school safety, and to embolden, encourage, enable, and empower local decisionmaking.

Today, I want to provide a very short report to my colleagues on what I have learned in my tour; and I encourage my colleagues to do the same around their States because it is genuinely a learning experience. The teaching moment of this tour changed my perspective on school safety, and certainly reinvigorated my appreciation for what happens in the classrooms and schools of our country with the leadership of our teachers and administrators. We owe them a great debt of gratitude.

The issue of safe and secure schools certainly raised its head last week in the town of Greenwich, CT, when reports of a gunman put Greenwich High School in a lockdown. Thankfully, the suspect was apprehended, unarmed, with no casualties. The fact that a lockdown was even necessary underscores that we have made great strides; but our young people will not be safe in schools unless we know all of the best practices and implement them. This threat proved empty, but it offered a learning experience in terms of the training, the locking and unlocking procedures for school doors, the types of issues that can be addressed through better and more regular coordination with local police and others who can provide that kind of guidance.

Over the past 3 weeks, the schools I visited were large and small, in widely varying parts of our State: Manchester High School, Kelly Middle School in Norwich, Middletown's Snow Elementary School, New Britain High School, West Bristol K–8 School, the Gilbert School in Winsted's High School, Northwestern Region 7 High School, Waterbury's West Side Middle School, Ross Woodward Magnet School, and Shelton Intermediate School. In every one of them, I saw different ways of dealing with school safety, and also aspiration for even better procedures and equipment—locks, lighting, alarms, cameras—but also training for teachers, and more school resource officers. I believe one of the most important pillars of this program has to be Federal resources that meet those local needs without imposing a one-size-fits-all policy. These schools are in widely different areas in terms of geography and demographics, the size of the communities they serve, the size of the schools, the qualifications of their staff and their training. That is why this program has to be individualized in terms of how it meets these needs and, again, empower and enable local decisionmaking.

The Secure Our Schools grant program has impacted Connecticut very positively. The program has a direct and tangible impact on schools in Stamford, for example, where the problem of gang violence was addressed, and in other schools around the State such as Hartford, where the grant was used for the purchase of an outdoor intercom station, as well as locks and card readers to control access to school.

The Secure Our Schools Program was a success story, and this act now will not only reauthorize but strengthen the Secure Our Schools Program.

To give some examples: In Manchester, the swipe card entry program not only provides for better security

but better attendance tracking. The Illing Middle School in Manchester is considering that system, but the installation costs run about $50,000—a small price to pay for greater security that the card system provides. In general, I found security was not only cost effective, it was minimal in its cost compared to many other programs we are potentially taking to improve school safety.

When I went to see Kelly Middle School in Norwich, I had to buzz in on an intercom and announce myself. That was true of many other schools as well. A Senate pin may allow us access to the floor of the Senate without passing through security, but it doesn't get you into Kelly Middle School, nor should it. They have a simple, practical system. If you are visiting during school hours, you buzz in and announce yourself, and then they decide whether that individual can enter through another set of locked doors. The double locks are a system that some schools are considering implementing. It is a sensible policy that is enabled by an intercom system and a camera—again, minimal in cost compared to many other infrastructure programs we may be considering this year.

In Middletown, I visited Snow Elementary School. Principal James Gaudreau demonstrated how their doors are locked. When a person is buzzed in, video cameras record and archive who is entering. Some schools have archiving systems, others do not. Law enforcement knows that archiving is important. As Chief William McKenna and Mayor Dan Drew told me, these systems are planning that was undertaken even before Sandy Hook. School systems, boards, administrators, and teachers were aware of security before Sandy Hook, but their awareness has been enhanced and they are planning to devote additional resources to this issue. Both Mayor Drew and Chief McKenna extolled the virtues of the three school resource officers, and they are looking for additional resources to create afterschool programs and other measures to enhance that partnership and cooperation between police and students, and teachers, educators, and law enforcement can collaborate.

Visiting New Britain was very important on this tour.

When I went to New Britain High School with Mayor Tim O'Brien and school superintendent Kelt Cooper, I saw there the requirement that any visitor is automatically run through a database check—the sex offender database check. Using the driver's license they were able to run that kind of check virtually instantaneously. They also have, in that single high school, 150 cameras to know what is going on in that school minute to minute and with direct links to the police headquarters so that any kind of emergency is immediately apparent to law enforcement. The school is going to install discrete panic buttons, allowing for rapid alerts to be sent to law enforcement, a belt-and-suspenders approach that many schools are implementing.

At Sandy Hook we know that Adam Lanza ended his massacre and took his own life when law enforcement arrived. So the presence of law enforcement can often have a powerful deterrent effect. The knowledge that apprehension will be swift, that killing will be stopped, is a huge deterrent.

At West Bristol K–8 School, Tim Callahan, who is the school project manager there, pointed out to me how a parent dropoff was configured with visual straight lines. Again, design and architecture is important to security so that out in the parking areas there are virtually no blind spots. They have integrated security features into this building while it was constructed. West Bristol also requires visitors to buzz in through the main office when they go through the main building. With grant funds made available under this legislation, this school could install locks on a second set of doors, slowing down potential intruders. We know in these dangerous emergency situations that time is critical. Slowing down a killer, stopping an invader at a second locked door, can gain time for law enforcement to respond and save lives.

Adam Lanza killed 26 people, 20 beautiful children and 6 great educators, in 5 minutes with 154 bullets. If he had been stopped earlier, if a second set of doors had alerted police, if a buzzer had been available of the most immediate kind available elsewhere, the consequences might have been different. There were alerts to the police. They responded virtually immediately. Their response was heroic and profoundly significant to saving even more lives. But we know that time is of the essence in these situations and that is why double locks, buzzer systems, identification, additional checks—all can be important.

The chief operating officer in New Haven Public Schools, Will Clark, told me about that kind of buzzer system there and in Winsted. School officials, including the regional school district school superintendent, Judith Palmer, and the high school principal, Candy Perez, are working hard to improve its security system. But infrastructure there, as they told me, is a continuing challenge. Winsted Board of Education member, Mimi Valyo, told me, ''We do not even have wifi.''

In 2013 we are in a wireless age, and the next generation of security systems may rely on Wi-Fi or smartphones. We need to make sure schools like Winsted have the resources they need to address the security needs of the 21st century with the technology of the 21st century. School security is too important to be allowed to lag.

I thank all of the educators who educated me, who shared with me their stories of progress, their goals for the future, their hopes that we can improve our schools and make them safer. If we make our schools safe, we make our children safer, and we make America safer. I am hopeful—more optimistic than ever in light of the vote we took last week—that we are making progress and that we will have positive votes in the days ahead, votes that fully fulfill our obligation to stop the plague of gun violence.

Again, I thank my colleagues for their courageous votes last week and urge them to move forward this week in the same way.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

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

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

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, last week Senator TOOMEY, my dear friend from Pennsylvania, and I introduced this important piece of bipartisan legislation with our colleagues Senator KIRK and Senator SCHUMER. It is called the Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act because that is what it does.

This bill protects the safety of the public and our constitutional right to bear arms. Since we introduced the bill, there has been a lot of misinformation about this legislation. I wish to set the record straight with hard facts about our proposal and what it will do and what it will not do.

I think people need to understand how guns first get into their life, which is through a commercial sale of some sort. We are not talking about creating any new laws; we are making the laws we have uniform.

First of all, today we have on the books FFL—Federal firearms licensed—dealers, and there are approximately 55,000 throughout the United States of America. We all have one close to us in our neighborhood. These are friends of mine and people I know. If a person goes to a licensed dealer today and purchases a gun, they are required to do a criminal background check. The background check is basically to see if that person is able to have a gun. That licensed dealer puts that record of the background check they did, and only he or she, as a licensed dealer, can keep it.

It is against the law to form some type of registry. The paranoia of those who say someone will know where my guns are and people can take them away cannot happen. In our bill, we double down to make sure it doesn't happen by making it a felony with a 15-year imprisonment, so that myth is gone.

The second way to buy a gun is at a gun show. If a person goes to a gun show and that same FFL dealer—if that person went to their store, he or she would go through a background

check. If a person goes to a gun show and buys from a dealer there, he or she would still have to go through a background check under current law. If that person goes to the next table, he or she can buy whatever they want and nobody is checking, and that is what we are going to stop.

Let's say I want to buy a gun through the Internet from Senator TOOMEY in Pennsylvania and I am in West Virginia. I see he has a gun for sale, and I want to buy that gun. As the law is stated today, as far as buying interstate—from West Virginia to Pennsylvania—Mr. TOOMEY would have to send that firearm to a licensed dealer in West Virginia, and I would have to have a background check done before I can take possession of that gun.

We are not creating new law. All we are saying is if a person goes to a gun show, there will be a background check for all guns that are sold at the gun show. If a person buys through the Internet, there will be a background check whether it is instate or out of State. This is not a universal background check. This is basically a criminal and mental background check and that criminal and mental background check has to show that person has been found guilty by a court that he or she is a criminal or criminally insane and not allowed to buy a gun and that is all.

So what everybody is hearing with all this talk is just falsehood. If a person is a law-abiding, proud gun owner, such as myself, and likes shooting and going out in the woods with friends and family, we do not infringe in any way, shape or form on individual transfer.

For those transactions which are not commercial transactions—for example, in West Virginia usually your grandfather or uncle or somebody gets you your first gun. There are some people who never bought a gun but have a collection of guns that was handed down to them by their family. Those people will still be able to have that type of transaction. That is not interfered with. A person can sell a gun to their neighbor without any interference. A person can put a note on the bulletin board in their church and say: I have a gun I would like to sell and sell it to a church member.

So if anyone says we are infringing on somebody's right, we are not. As we worked on the bill, we basically looked at the gun culture in America, who we are, how we become who we are, and that is what we took into consideration.

I, for one, as a gun owner and a person who enjoys hunting and shooting and all the things and camaraderie which that brings, I feel sometimes I am looked upon in an objectionable way because I enjoy that. I am a law-abiding citizen and my second amendment right gives me that right. I want to make sure that right is protected. I also have a responsibility to do the right thing, and that is why we are here.

If we are looking for ways to keep our citizens safe from mass violence, then shouldn't we look at the culture of mass violence? I have gone around to the schools in West Virginia and talked to some of the students.

We can talk to our young pages, the brightest and best of what we have. They have probably become desensitized compared to what the Presiding Officer and I would have seen in our generation. If we saw what they do in a movie—and we didn't have the Internet back then, so we didn't have anything to compare to it.

If we are going to talk about banning somebody's weapon, such as a hand-me-down gun, if you will, don't you think we ought to have people with expertise who can tell what the gun does to make sure it isn't just something that might look fancy but doesn't perform any better than a deer rifle? The Commission on Mass Violence is part of this bill. Basically, we are going to have people who have gun expertise, people who have mental illness expertise.

I have gone to the schools and talked to teachers in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. They are saying: Wait a minute. We have no help. We have identified kids who are challenged mentally or come from a home that is unstable and not getting proper support, and we have nothing to do to help them. As a society, I believe we have a responsibility, so we are going to have that Commission with guns and mental illness expertise.

How about school safety expertise? We had the horrific situation in Newtown. That gentleman got in that school, not because he had a key or because the door was unlocked, he got in that school because he was able to shoot the glass out of the front door and stick his arm in, hit the safety bar and let himself in.

I have been a Governor for 6 years in the State of West Virginia. We built a lot of schools, and we remodeled a lot of schools. Not once did an architect come to me and say: Governor, if we are going to build these schools, we need all these safety devices so a person cannot get into the school.

They told me about the lockdown for each room so a person would need to have a safety code to get into a room. Not one time was I told we should have bulletproof glass on every first floor window. Not one time was that ever brought up to me. We need people who have school safety expertise.

There is video violence. Talk to the children and youth of today. If you have not gotten on the Internet lately and flipped to video violence, you should do it. It will amaze you. What you see will absolutely scare you. They are exposed to horrific things, which I can never imagine from my childhood. Don't you think we should have the people who are the first defenders of the first amendment come and talk to us about how we can change the culture of violence in our society? That is what we are talking about.

I have heard a lot of my colleagues on different talk shows saying they didn't like this or we should be doing that. My good friend Senator PAT TOOMEY and I are going to go through this bill and explain what it does and what it doesn't do and how we can move the ball forward by keeping society safe, treating law-abiding gun owners with the respect they should have and make sure criminals or the mentally insane who have been found to be so by court cannot buy a gun.

So if someone is a law-abiding gun owner, they are going to like this bill. If someone is a believer in the second amendment right of Americans to bear arms, they are going to like this bill. If someone is a defender of the rights of our military veterans, they are definitely going to like this bill. If someone is looking for ways to keep our citizens safe from mass violence, especially our precious children, they are going to like this bill. For those criminals or persons who have been declared mentally insane by the courts, they are not going to like this bill, and that is exactly what we have tried to do.

I want to go through much of this, but I want to give my friend Senator PAT TOOMEY an opportunity. I appreciate his input so much. We are sister States, West Virginia and Pennsylvania—especially western Pennsylvania. My family and I grew up in Farmington and Fairmont and northern West Virginia, which is an hour and a half below Pennsylvania. We have the same slangs and sayings. We say ''you'ns'' instead of you all or you. Pat and I understand each other.

I would like Senator TOOMEY to explain the part that is so near and dear to him as well as to me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

TRAGEDY AT THE BOSTON MARATHON

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I wish to begin by actually taking a moment to inform the Members of this body and people who may be listening, if you were not aware, it appears that a tragedy has struck at the Boston Marathon and bombs have gone off and there are injuries that we know of, casualties, the severity of which we do not yet know. We hope and pray there are no fatalities. Apparently, according to the news reports I have seen, it is too soon to know that with certainty.

I know my good friend from West Virginia joins me in having our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and their families of the very disturbing news we have just learned this afternoon.

GUN SAFETY

Mr. TOOMEY. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate the Senator from West Virginia. The work we have done together has been challenging and constructive. I think we have come to a

very sensible legislative product—something I can be proud of. I want to thank Senator KIRK for the work he did on this from way back, and Senator SCHUMER's contribution to this process as well.

I wish to start, if I could, with some thoughts about the second amendment and what it means to me and why I think a proper understanding is so important in this discussion.

Sometimes it is useful to go to the source, and so, as a reminder—not that we are not familiar with it—I am going to read from my pocket version of the Constitution the second amendment to the Constitution, which simply says:

> A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Today, we often think that the second amendment is about sportsmen, it is about hunting. That is an important part of it. But the second amendment is actually much more profound than a protection for hunters. It is more fundamental to our country and who we are as a people.

In my view, the Framers, in writing the second amendment, were recognizing our natural rights, our natural law rights of self-defense and self-preservation. In fact, those rights precede the Constitution. They were acknowledging and recognizing those rights in the Constitution. They did not create them.

I would also suggest that the second amendment is about sovereignty. Who is sovereign in this country? Is it the government? Is it the head of state or is it the people? I think, as we know, this whole great experiment of ours that is America is an exercise in recognizing the sovereignty of the individual people. And a sovereign people, it flows logically, ought to have the right to bear arms, to protect themselves.

Ultimately, our Founders intended the second amendment to be the means by which we would maintain our liberty and prevent tyranny. We often take things for granted in a democratic society in which we get to select our own government and our constitutionally protected rights are respected. But we all know that around the world and in the recent past there have been appalling cases where tyranny has destroyed the rights of relatively free peoples who in many ways have come from societies not terribly dissimilar to ours.

So these are some of the thoughts that occur to me when I think about the second amendment, why it is so important to me. I see it as a very important part of our very identity as a Nation and as a people. It is why it is very important to me personally.

In addition to being a gun owner and someone who has always respected these rights, it has a very important philosophical underpinning for me.

For years, of course, we had many contentious debates. One of the contentious debates we had about the second amendment for many years probably arose from the first phrase about the ''well regulated Militia.'' The debate centered around whether this right, this second amendment right—that, obviously, is enshrined in the Constitution—was a collective right that depended on one's membership in a militia or if it were an individual right belonging to individual people.

It was always clear to me this is an individual right. It is clear to me for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the Founders never recognized the idea of collective rights. For them, it was all about individual rights. But, fortunately, our judicial system put an end to that question when a conservative majority of U.S. Supreme Court Justices reached the Heller decision. In District of Columbia v. Heller they made it very clear this is not a collective right, this is not contingent upon membership in a militia. The second amendment is an individual right that applies to individual Americans. And I wholeheartedly agree.

Not too long after that, in the McDonald et al. v. City of Chicago decision, the Court went even further in a way in upholding the Heller decision and referencing that. It affirmed that decision, but it went farther and said this second amendment right is so important and so fundamental and so basic that it is binding on States and local governments as well. So not only can the Federal Government not infringe upon second amendment rights, but neither can a State or a local government. So that is a pretty impressive conclusion that our Court has come to in resolving a big part of this contentious debate.

I would pose a question the Court has also addressed, and that is, is this a right that is enjoyed by all of the people of America? In my opinion—and I think this is not controversial—the answer to that question is no. Young children are not expected to be afforded the same second amendment rights as adults. Criminals who have been convicted of crimes have foregone many of their rights, including second amendment rights, by virtue of their conviction of serious crimes. And dangerously mentally ill people are people whom we as a society have every right to protect ourselves from, and so they do not have the same second amendment rights everyone else has.

Now, I would argue, to our Founders this was a given. After all, this was a time when capital punishment was quite common and they fully accepted capital punishment. How perverse and absurd would the idea be that someone who was subject to capital punishment would somehow be able to enjoy second amendment rights? Of course not. It is obvious criminals forego that right.

The Heller decision, the recent Supreme Court decision I referred to, addresses this as well. Justice Scalia observed:

> Nothing in our opinion—

That is the Heller opinion affirming the individual right of the second amendment—He says:

> Nothing in our opinion should be taken to cast doubt on long-standing prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill . . . or laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms.

It seems to me that is a very explicit explanation that it is not an infringement on second amendment rights to attempt to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals and mentally ill people.

So if the Founders were in agreement on this, and the Supreme Court is in agreement, and we have laws in all 50 States that make it illegal for certain criminals and mentally ill people to have firearms, the question is: Are we willing to take modest measures to try to achieve this goal that I think we all share and that is clearly consistent with our Constitution?

That is what Senator MANCHIN and Senator KIRK and I are trying to do here today. What we are trying to do is make it a little bit more difficult for the people who are not supposed to have firearms in the first place to obtain them. I think Senator MANCHIN will agree with me there is no panacea here, there is no law anyone could write—certainly not this one—that is ever going to guarantee that a determined criminal will not be able to obtain a weapon one way or another or that maybe even a mentally ill person may not be able to obtain a weapon eventually if they are sufficiently determined. But can't we take a very modest step to make it more difficult, if we can do it in a way that does not infringe on the second amendment rights of law-abiding citizens whose rights we want to defend?

So I think of our bill as doing three broad things. And Senator MANCHIN and I will walk through some of the specifics of how we achieve this. But I would suggest one way to think about it is three categories.

One is, we simply encourage greater compliance with the background check system we have in place now. We are not inventing a new one. We are not inventing new criteria for it. But the fact is, the participation in the background check system by the various States—you see, we rely on the States to provide information about the people who have been adjudicated as mentally dangerous, the people who have been adjudicated as criminals. They have been convicted. The Federal government does not have that information. We rely on the States to provide it. What we do in this bill is create greater incentives for the States to, in fact, participate because the participation varies dramatically.

A second thing we do is expand background checks to gun sales at gun shows and over the Internet. Again, this is not a new system. We are just applying this background check to a category that has not been subject to it, but it is the existing system.

Then the third thing is—and we will talk about this at a little length, I hope—we have a number of measures in this bill that, frankly, I think are overdue and they enhance the opportunity for law-abiding citizens to simply exercise the second amendment rights they ought to be able to exercise.

I think Senator MANCHIN put this very well. If you are a law-abiding citizen who enjoys exercising second amendment rights, you are going to like this bill. It is going to enhance your ability to exercise those rights that you have. If you are a criminal, and you want to get a weapon illegally, you probably are not going to like this bill because it is going to make it a little harder for you to do that. It will also make it harder for someone who is mentally ill.

I am going to yield back for my friend, the Senator from West Virginia. But before I do that, I want to make one simple point about how tangible and how real and how important this can be. I am referring to enhancing compliance with the NICS background check system.

We all remember the Virginia Tech shootings. One of the aspects of this tragedy is that the shooter's ability to obtain a weapon might have been prevented. I say that because the young man, Seung-Hui Cho, had already been adjudicated to be mentally ill, dangerously so, by a Virginia judge. They had discovered this. They had figured this out. They knew this was a very unstable and very dangerous man. But the State of Virginia never passed that information on. So there was no information about this man in the national background check system when who knows whatever demons possessed him to go out and obtain guns so he could wreak the havoc he did. He went and submitted himself to a background check, and he passed with flying colors because the system did not have the data.

One of the things Senator MANCHIN and I are proposing in this legislation is, let's provide greater incentives; and there is a carrot and there is a stick and a cost to States so they will be more in compliance.

Now, I will be clear: If Virginia had provided this information to the system, then this shooter from Virginia Tech would have been denied that day and we do not know what would have happened after that. It is possible he would have found some other way to obtain weapons. But think of all the other things that might have happened. If he had been denied at that moment and he had walked out of that store, who knows what else might have intervened—whether he would have gotten help, whether he would have been stopped some other way. We will never know that. But it seems to me it is a good idea to try to put that block in place, and that is one of the things we would achieve. Our legislation, I think, would go a long way over time to encouraging and, in fact, realizing a greater compliance on the part of the various States.

Senator MANCHIN may want to elaborate a little bit on how we achieve that, and then I would continue in this discussion with him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I come from a State where, like most of the rural States in America, there are an awful lot of people who live a solid life. There is a thing back home that we call a person having either common sense or nonsense, and now we think people ought to have a little gun sense. It just makes sense when we think about what we are doing—not infringing on anybody's rights but protecting those rights—by prohibiting those who shouldn't be able to have a firearm through a commercial transaction from getting one.

My good friend Senator TOOMEY was just talking about second amendment rights, which all of us hold near and dear if a person comes from a gun culture State such as ours. With that being said—I just talked about common sense and gun sense—one of the largest progun organizations in the country, the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, which is strictly for the right to protect the second amendment, has come out in total support of this legislation—total support. Do my colleagues know why? Because they read the bill. That is all we are asking. They read the bill.

A lot of our colleagues have been told certain things. We have a lot of friends in different gun organizations who have been told different things. All Senator TOOMEY and I ask is to take the time and read the bill.

We started out working this bill from so many different angles. Everybody had a part in this. What we tried to do was find something that would make a difference.

I want my colleagues to think about this: Most of our colleagues have been visited by those unbelievable families from Newtown. I can't even imagine—I really can't, I still cannot—I know the Presiding Officer probably saw the clips when I lost control of my emotions, but I am a grandfather, I am a father, and I can only imagine what these families are going through.

Let me put my colleagues in that state of mind, of losing a child in such a tragic way. A child goes to school. A parent would never expect that child not to come home from school—one of the most sacred places we have—but it happens. How would my colleagues feel? What state of mind would they be in? Let me tell my colleagues their state of mind. To a person, each one of these family members came in and said: We don't want to take anybody's guns away. We don't want to ban any weapons. We don't want to infringe on people's second amendment right.

On top of that, they said: We really know and realize the bill the Senate is working on right now would not have saved our beautiful little children. But what we are asking the Senate to do is maybe save another family, just maybe prevent another family from going through what we went through.

We need to think about that. I wish I could be that strong. I said that if 100 of us in this body had 1 ounce of the courage those family members have, oh, my goodness, what a body we would have. If we weren't worried about all of the outside pressure and maybe getting elected, maybe getting the campaign funds it would take for us to go out and get elected, if we worried about basically keeping a gun out of the hands of a criminal in a commercial transaction—a criminal who has gone through a court system and has been found guilty—or out of the hands of a mentally insane person who has gone through a court and found to be unfit, just maybe we could save one life.

Someone says: Well, why would the Senate take this on? I don't know why else we were sent here other than to try to make a difference. The easiest vote I can make while I am a Senator is no. I can vote no on about everything and be fine. I can go home and people won't say: Why did you do that?

I am glad you voted that way because I don't like that either.

Do my colleagues follow me? ''No'' is the safest vote as a Congressperson or a Senator. I understand that.

It is wonderful, I guess, to have the title of ''Senator.'' It is a great honor to be in this unbelievable body with these truly magnificent people. I want to make a difference. I want to do something, and I think most of my colleagues do as well.

The only thing I am asking of my colleagues who have been told something or have heard something or have gotten pressured phone calls and letters is to read the bill. Just read it. It is only 49 pages. When have we had something that could change the course of our country and it is only 49 pages long? I have seen bills that were 1,000 pages, 500 pages, amendments that were 300 pages. We have an entire bill that is 49 pages. That is all we have asked for. That is all.

My dear friend Senator TOOMEY and I are going to be on the floor for quite some time. Tomorrow we will probably be joined by our other good friends, Senator KIRK and Senator SCHUMER. Everybody has come together. Senator SCHUMER started with a piece for the bill, and I said: My dear friend CHUCK, I can't support that.

He said: Can I work with you?

I said: I would love for you to work with me.

My dear friend MARK KIRK from Illinois has been steadfast and rock solid. He has been right there.

This is bipartisan. Bipartisan—is it Democratic and Republican? This is America. I don't want to say it is bipartisan. This is America. This is about whether we can make a difference. Can we change something? Can

we have the influence of people who are basically the most unselfish, strongest, bravest people I have ever met, including the families of the Newtown children, to be able to come and say: Listen, I want to protect the rights of law-abiding citizens. I want people to have their rights. I want people to enjoy their guns. I want people to enjoy their hunting trips with their families. I want people to enjoy all the things the second amendment gives us. But I want to protect another family, protect another child, protect another person in America.

That is all we are trying to do.

As we look through the bill, there are so many different things we have talked about. I have heard people say: Oh, my goodness, they are going to start registering, and they are going to give all of those records to some big fancy computer that is going to know exactly where to come and get the gun of the Presiding Officer.

Not only does the law prohibit that today, this bill—when we pass this bill, this law will basically say: If any government agency intends to do that and abuse that record the law-abiding firearm dealer is supposed to keep—and only them—it will not only be a felony, it will entail 15 years of imprisonment. That is why we have these organizations basically joining in after looking at and reading the bill and saying: My goodness, this is really protecting second amendment rights.

So it is an emotional bill. It is an emotional time in our country, but truly it is a time for us to come together. It truly is. There is healing that must go on, and this bill will help that healing.

We want to talk about this, and we are going to go into it detail by detail, step by step.

I thank my good friend Senator PAT TOOMEY from Pennsylvania, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I think it might be useful to discuss some of the specific ways in which this legislation would enhance the compliance and the participation on the part of our 50 States with this existing background check system.

As Senator MANCHIN said—as we both said—we are not creating a new system. We are not creating a new set of rules by which the system operates. What we are simply asking is that since States already have information about people who are criminals and people who are dangerously mentally ill, we want them to put that in the database so we can discover when someone attempts to buy a firearm.

By the way——

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, if my friend will yield, if I may, I would like to mention that we also discussed including an incentive so someone can't say that is an unfunded mandate. That provision is not an unfunded mandate, I say to my colleague.

Mr. TOOMEY. I also wish to mention one of the very typical categories of mental illness we want to capture, and that is people who have been publicly adjudicated. So that would be people who have pleaded not guilty to a crime by reason of insanity. That strikes me as a pretty good definition of somebody who is mentally ill. And someone who is deemed not competent to stand trial by virtue of their mental deficiency would be another category.

But the idea is that we have a series of specific measures that would encourage greater compliance. There is a carrot-and-stick approach. We would authorize some funding. It would have to live within the spending caps we have already agreed to, the overall spending caps, but we authorize funding for grants that States can use to carry out, first of all, an assessment of the extent to which they are or are not currently in compliance. As I said, some States are probably doing virtually all they can and other States are doing almost nothing in terms of providing the information they have to this database system, and they can start with an assessment of that.

We would then ask them to submit a 4-year plan by which they would develop full compliance or as full as they can achieve in 4 years. They work this out with the Attorney General. There will be benchmarks along the way. They would have a series of steps they would take by which they would start to turn over this information they already have about people who are criminals and people who are mentally ill.

If a State refuses to develop such a plan or to achieve the benchmarks they set out in their own plan, then we propose they have a penalty and they would lose some funding. That is the mechanism by which we have an inducement, an incentive for these States. They could lose up to 15 percent of what is known as the Byrne/JAG funding, which is funding Congress annually makes available to States for fighting crime.

So I believe this is a sensible combination of measures to simply encourage States to participate as they should.

If the Senator from West Virginia has anything more to say about the NICS improvement piece of this, I will certainly yield. If not, I want to mention a reason why I feel strongly about expanding the background checks. But at this point I yield for the Senator from West Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. I thank the good Senator from Pennsylvania. I appreciate that. I think what he said is spot-on. He is basically saying it preserves important exemptions of background checks that are in current law, such as the temporary transfers. That way, for example, a person can lend their hunting rifle. We are hearing all of those misnomers, such as that people can't even lend their hunting rifle to a friend or a family member. People can do that. We are not preventing that. There are no restrictions in those circumstances. Also under current law are transfers between families, friends, and neighbors, which we have already talked about. That can be done. That is not what we are talking about. Again, it is just common sense.

As I said, the Senator from Pennsylvania, as well as our other colleagues, Senator KIRK and Senator SCHUMER, and I have been talking back and forth about this. This is not a bill written by just Senators. We have had input from the outside. We have included people from all different walks of life. We would then proceed to do a little research to find out if what they suggested made sense and if it had been done and if it hadn't, whether an infringement occurred to a person who has not been able to enjoy their rights as a law-abiding citizen. We did all of that.

I appreciate so much the Senator from Pennsylvania pointing out those issues, and we will talk more about it later.

I yield for the Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, the last point I wish to make is something about the NICS system that I should have mentioned; that is, currently there are States in which someone can be adjudicated as mentally ill, for instance, but that person is left with very few options to challenge that status. That is the current situation. We remedy that. One of the things we require in this bill, in the 4-year plan States have to develop, is that it has to include a program, a mechanism by which a person who feels they have been wrongly designated as someone who can't own a firearm by virtue of their criminal background or their mental health would have an opportunity to challenge that, as they should. There ought to be a process they can go through to challenge that finding so that nobody who doesn't belong on this list ends up on this list.

Let me move on to the background checks at gun shows. I am going to introduce this by reading a letter I received from a constituent yesterday. This happens to be a woman whom I know very well. I have known her for years. She is a conservative Republican, as it happens. She is a second amendment gun owner. Let me read what she wrote:

> Hello, Pat. I just had to write after watching your leadership with this very difficult issue. I very much understand what you are doing with the gun show checks and appreciate your dealing with this. This issue is very personal to me and if you will indulge me, I will tell you.

She goes on to say:

> I'm a very strong supporter of the second amendment. I'm the gun owner in my house. I do shoot. My father very proudly passed down his Remington 1100 to me several years before he passed away. He presented it to me with great pride. I accepted it as a very special moment between us. Meanwhile, Pat, I

have an adopted daughter who has had emotional troubles her entire life. Much of our journey with her has been difficult and it continues to this day. My daughter has been involuntarily committed twice, and I unfortunately believe that it won't be the last time, as she refuses to get proper treatment. I was the one who had to sign her paperwork the first time. And it was made clear to me that I would be taking away her right to own a gun. I knew that we had no choice but to try and get her some help. But my hands shook and I had to pause quite a long time over that document, because I so strongly believe in our second amendment rights. Nevertheless, I signed it and I would do it again today.

At various times, people have been concerned for our safety with the volatile nature of my daughter's problems. The idea that she would be able to purchase a weapon openly in a public venue is not acceptable. I do not believe that she actually would, but I don't find any comfort in the fact that she could have an avenue if she so chose. Once again, I cannot emphasize the importance of the second amendment to me enough. Pat, I thank you for your efforts in D.C. and bless you for all that you're doing. Be well and be strong.

I think that says a lot about what we are trying to accomplish. Here we have a passionate supporter of the second amendment, a gun owner, someone who has always been a believer in the second amendment. For reasons that she has explained very personally, very important reasons, she does not want her daughter to be able to go into a gun show and buy a firearm without so much as a background check.

Since the mom has the recognition of her daughter's problems, if the information is provided and if that State complies—in this case it is my State of Pennsylvania—with this background check system, then someone in the circumstances of her daughter attempting to buy a weapon at a gun show would be denied.

I think that is the outcome we all want. It is certainly the outcome her own mother wants, who loves her dearly and loves the second amendment.

I would yield back to the Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I think we all have letters such as Senator TOOMEY read right now and people looking for what we call gun sense, which goes right along with common sense. There is so much out there about the bill. Let me just reiterate a couple of things the bill does not do.

What the bill will not do: The bill will not in any way, shape, or form infringe upon anyone's second amendment right to keep and bear arms. In fact, it strengthens that, as Senator TOOMEY has so eloquently described.

The bill will not take away anyone's guns. Nobody will have their guns taken away. The bill will not ban any type of a firearm. It is not even in the bill. We are not banning anything. The bill will not ban or restrict the use of any kind of bullet or any size of clip. It is not in this legislation.

The bill will not create a national registry, which we just spoke about. In fact, it explicitly prohibits that, which would give the penalties of a felony and a 15-year sentence. As we talk about this bill, we are asking our colleagues to come down and bring their questions, concerns, or what they believe and what they have seen in talking to their constituents.

Right now I am very pleased to have with me a colleague of mine from the Big Sky State of Montana. He comes from gun culture like myself and Senator TOOMEY. I yield to the Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I would like to thank the Senators from West Virginia and Pennsylvania. I rise to talk about the Toomey-Manchin amendment, knowing this is not an end-all when it comes to violence in America.

We have to do some things that revolve around mental health, mental illness, how we treat that, how we move forward in ways that make sense for folks who believe strongly in the second amendment, but also believe in how we make our communities safer. So whether it is the Toomey-Manchin amendment or whether it is some other amendment that may came up during this debate, or whether it is an amendment that deals with mental health and how we treat it and how we get professionals out there on the ground, this is a very important issue for folks in this country.

The second amendment is very important. I now want to give a little bit of background, which most of the Senators know. I come from a farming background. My grandparents came to our farm a little over 100 years ago. When my folks took the place over, my dad set up a custom butcher shop. For 20 years my wife Sharla and I ran that custom butcher shop. That means every morning, literally every morning, I would get up and we would go knock down a beef or a pork with a gun.

I literally made a good portion of my living on the farm with a gun. It was a tool. It was a way that kept us on the farm. It was a way that kept our farm economically viable. But you do not have to be a butcher to know the value of a gun. In Montana, we have sports men and women who literally start hunting at a very early age and know how to handle a gun. They know responsible gun ownership when they see it. They know irresponsible gun ownership when they see that too.

Right now, anybody can go out and buy a gun. In some States where the national instant crime background check is not very good, literally anybody, whether they have a criminal record or history of violent mental illness, can go out and buy a gun. I think what we are trying to do, what Senators MANCHIN and TOOMEY are trying to do with this amendment is to make the second amendment stronger for the people who are law-abiding gun owners but yet trying to keep guns out of the hands of folks who cannot handle them in a responsible way, and have a record of that—a court-adjudicated record.

As we move forward and talk about the things this bill does positively and negatively, I want to tell you, I have read it forwards and backwards. I have talked to folks. I can tell you this makes my second amendment rights stronger. For that I thank you.

Here is how it does it: My second amendment rights are only put at risk by people who use guns in an improper way. This bipartisan agreement makes sure we protect that second amendment for responsible gun owners, not just in a willy-nilly way, by the way. This clearly defines what irresponsible gun ownership is. It fixes the underlying bill that, quite frankly, I moved to move forward on. But without this amendment I could not support it.

It does some positive things like lets gun dealers sell firearms across State lines at gun shows. That is new. It improves the process by which someone can get their rights restored. This is a big one for me. We have veterans returning from Iran and Afghanistan, by the way, who need treatment, can go get treatment. This bill does not impact them whatsoever.

On the other hand, if somebody has a serious problem, gets put on a list, they have the ability through this law to be able to get off that list once they prove they can handle that gun ownership responsibly. There has been a lot of talk about gun registries. This bill prohibits it from the Department of Justice. The way the world is right now I think it is fair to say nothing changes: No gun registry now. No gun registry after this amendment is passed. In fact, this strictly prohibits it when it comes to the Department of Justice.

There are protections in here for veterans to make sure they are treated fairly by the system. I serve on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Montana has the second most per capita number of veterans in the country. It is important—it was true in Vietnam, but especially with Iraq and Afghanistan—that these folks are able to get the treatment they need without impacting their second amendment rights. I think we are clear on that. It does not impact them in a negative way.

If you want to give a gun to your son or daughter or you want to sell it to your neighbors or friends, there is no background check required. Active military can buy a gun in their home State or the station where they are, not just their duty station. It allows for a concealed carry permit to be used in lieu of a background check. But the bottom line is it does not impact my second amendment rights whatsoever.

I was on the tractor this weekend seeding a few peas and a little bit of barley. On the radio came a show called ''Tradio,'' where if you have something you want to sell, you put it on the radio. One of the things that was being sold was a .308 rifle. Under this bill, if I put a .308 rifle on the radio, and PATRICK TOOMEY calls me and says he wants to buy that gun, I

can. PATRICK TOOMEY is a friend of mine. We can sell it; no background check.

But if someone I do not know calls, then we whip down to the local store, do a quick background check, which takes—well, I will ask Senator MANCHIN from West Virginia. How long does a background check typically take on an individual buying a gun?

Mr. MANCHIN. I would say that more than 90 percent of the background checks in America that are done are less than 3 minutes, and probably even no more than a minute and a half. So in that range. That tells you about how quick it can be done.

Mr. TESTER. Exactly. So you zip down to the local gun store, wherever it might be in your town, do the background check. Then you do not have to worry about if, in fact, that person has a criminal past or is severely, violently mentally ill. It will be there. There is also language in this bill that if a State is not putting information in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, money is pulled back.

In the State of Montana, I believe it is about 10 percent. In the State of Montana, that is serious dollars. It is well over $100,000 to be pulled back.

Would the Senator from West Virginia like to talk about the thinking that went into that and how this could impact the background checks?

Mr. MANCHIN. All of the Members who worked on the bill, Senators TOOMEY, KIRK, and SCHUMER, all of us got together on that. There had to be—basically, one of our largest gun organizations brought us to task saying: We supported background checks 10 or more years ago. It just did not work.

You know what. They were right. So we said: Fine. Do you throw the baby out with the bathwater or do you change the water and make it a little bit better?

So we went back and looked at it. We said: Fine. We did not want any unfunded mandates. We put $100 million a year for 4 years for the States to have grants to get them up and running to where they should be. So there is an incentive. We also said: If you do not do your job and you do not turn your records over of your adjudicated criminals or mental illness records, then 10 percent the first year, 11 percent—then I think it goes to 13 and up to 15. That is off of the Byrne/JAG money. Every State depends on that Byrne/JAG money. That is serious. No one else has ever put that in there.

You know what. That concern came from the gun organizations right now, one of them who is not supporting it and should be.

Mr. TESTER. Well, the bottom line is, I think this puts into effect real incentives to keep this National Instant Criminal Background Check System database up to snuff.

There is also a Commission on Mass Violence in this bill, which I think is good policy as we move forward, as we find almost on a daily basis some incident which has happened and is unacceptable.

The bottom line—and I know the Senator has talked about this a lot during the presentation of his bill. He has spoken about something called common sense. This would ensure when we do a background check it actually is a background check. This bill will not solve all the violence problems in this country, not even close. Is it a step in the right direction while protecting my second amendment rights? Yes, it is.

Does it take away my guns? Does it stop my ability to go out and buy any guns I could buy today? No, it does not.

Does it have any impact on things like assault rifles or big, large magazine clips? No, it does not.

What it does is once the National Instant Criminal Background Check System is up to snuff, it will contain people who have a history of violence who used guns improperly. It will prevent people who are violently mentally ill from going out there and purchasing a gun.

If we are able to work together in a bipartisan way, as the Senator from West Virginia and the Senator from Pennsylvania have done, hopefully, we may move forward with some issues and policies which deal with mental health in this country, an issue we have not dealt with well as a society, or the stigma associated with it. If we can do this there are other amendments we may potentially put on this bill as we move forward.

If the amendments have commonsense backing and protect the second amendment, we should take a hard look at them and have a debate on those also. The bottom line is I want my second amendment rights protected. I want law-abiding citizens in this country to be able to continue to purchase firearms. I want my kids to be able to do that, my grandkids to be able to do that. I think this bill ensures that. I thank the sponsors for their hard work.

I yield for the Senator from West Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. I wish to thank my good friend, the Senator from Montana. I know how many calls he has received and the pressure. I know this because of all of the misconceptions and untruths. He did something we are asking all of our colleagues to do. He read the bill and found out for himself this bill does exactly what we have been trying to do for a long time: most importantly, protect the innocent and our people by keeping guns away from people and children who shouldn't have them. He read the bill. This is all we have asked for.

I yield for my friend from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. The Senator makes a point which may seem basic. This bill has been available online since Thursday night. It is available now and in every detail. It is available in summary form and available in any way people choose to look at it.

The Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, one of the pro second amendment rights groups which endorses this bill, states:

> If you read the Manchin-Toomey substitute amendment, you can see all the advances for our cause, that it contains.

This ''cause'' refers to defense of the second amendment, which it contains.

The bottom line is, as the Senator from Montana pointed out, our amendment isn't gun control. This is very clear, and I think it is an important contrast. There are other Members of this body who are not happy with this bill because they want active, aggressive gun control. For instance, they want to ban various categories of weapons. They wish to ban various categories of ammunition. They would like to ban various kinds of waiting periods and put other restrictions on law-abiding citizens. This is gun control. Restricting the freedom of law-abiding citizens who have never done anything to harm anyone and restricting their second amendment rights is gun control. I disagree with it. I oppose it. I will oppose every such amendment which comes before this body.

Trying to keep guns out of the hands of people who aren't legally entitled to have them—dangerous people, be they criminals or dangerously mentally ill people—that is not gun control; this is common sense.

As I started off my comments, there is no dispute this is not an infringement on the second amendment. Our Founders didn't think so. Our Supreme Court Justices didn't think so. The laws in 50 States don't maintain this. It is common sense.

I wish to point out another difference in the approach Senator MANCHIN and I have taken versus some others in this body have taken. Others have said let's make a universal background check, and then we will think about who to make an exception for. Then they carve out very narrow categories.

One of the problems with that, in my view, is we will not imagine every sort of set of circumstances we ought to carve out. We took a different approach. We said private transactions generally don't need to be subject to this. I am not going to try to imagine every conceivable private transaction. We said let's have background checks on commercial transactions. This is where the big volume of commercial transactions occur and where strangers are buying and selling guns from each other. This is why we require the background check at gun shows, and we require the background check on Internet sales.

The private transaction, whether it is with a family member, friends, neighbors or colleagues, if it doesn't happen at a gun show and doesn't happen over the Internet, it is not subject

to the background check. We thought that would be an unnecessary burden on people who know each other.

Let me just run through quickly some of the ways in which this legislation strengthens the ability of law-abiding citizens to exercise their second amendment rights. I will do this briefly. The Senator from Montana touched on some of these. I ought to start off underscoring something the Senator from West Virginia mentioned earlier.

Not only will this not in any way contribute to any kind of national registry, it is explicitly forbidden. Anybody in the Federal Government who did try to create a Federal registry would become a felon and subject to 15 years in prison. This is point No. 1.

One of the problems we have heard from our constituents who are gun enthusiasts, which we were able to address in this legislation, is clarifying and fixing interstate travel laws such as for sportsmen who are traveling long distances. Unfortunately, it happens too frequently when a sportsman is traveling from one State to another State, perhaps on a hunting trip or going home for Christmas and wishes to give a relative a gun for a present. He is perfectly, lawfully entitled to own this gun. He is following the rules and regulations in his State. He packs the gun appropriately in his vehicle. As he is traveling through another State, he discovers he is not in compliance with the other State.

People have gotten themselves into trouble. They have not done anything to harm anybody, they are just traveling into a State which has a whole different regime and doesn't respect the regime of the other State.

We fixed that by clarifying in the legislation if a person is transiting through a State and in compliance with the laws of their home State, they are OK. We permit interstate handgun sales from dealers. We provide—and this is very important; the Senator from Montana mentioned this—a legal process for restoring veterans second amendment rights.

We have a problem in this country right now for veterans. They come back after serving this country, risking their lives, often sustaining injuries, sustaining trauma. They can go to the VA and have a social worker decide they are not able to handle their personal financial matters. This alone puts them on the registry, disqualifies them from being able to own a firearm legally and be able to purchase one.

I think this is outrageous, frankly. This is currently happening every day to veterans. We deal with that. We change the system. Under our legislation, this couldn't happen. Before anybody at the VA could designate a veteran as somebody who can't own a firearm, first they would need to inform the veteran 30 days in advance to give the veteran an opportunity to challenge the status. This is only fair. We owe that to those men and women who have given so much to us. This is in our bill.

We also have a policy today where the law of the land forbids an Active-Duty military person from buying a gun in his home State. I don't know whose idea this was. It doesn't make any sense to me. This is the law. We repeal the policy in this bill to enable a man or woman serving in uniform in this country to buy a firearm in their home State. We also allow a person who has a concealed carry permit to use the permit as the mechanism by which they are approved for a gun sale. This stands to reason. The concealed carry permit process is itself a very cumbersome and onerous process. In many cases it is very thorough and very expensive. If someone passes that they should be fine. We have it in this bill as well.

I wish to underscore that these are the reasons two of the leading pro second amendment groups have endorsed this bill. It enhances the opportunity of law-abiding citizens to exercise their second amendment rights. If someone is a criminal or mentally unqualified to have a firearm, they are not going to like this bill.

As I said at the beginning, I feel very strongly about this. It is not gun control to try to keep guns out of the hands of people who are not qualified to have them.

I, again, wish to thank the Senator from West Virginia, my friend. I appreciate the hard work he has put into this. I appreciate the chance to share these thoughts and work with him. We will welcome any questions, comments, ideas or suggestions from our colleagues as we wrestle with this bill in the coming days and, hopefully, have a vote soon which will be successful on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. I wish to thank Senator TOOMEY for his hard work, to be involved, informed, and to bring his expertise to the discussion we have had with our colleagues.

As he has been speaking we have been joined by our good friend Senator TESTER from Montana. Those of us who come from a gun culture State can put some of these myths to the side, if you will, and allow the facts to come out.

I think the most important thing about speaking today for a while is that we are not creating new law, we are improving old law. This is what we were sent here to do.

My father used to say the only thing that is new in this world is a pair of eyes. Everything else has been pretty much an improvement of what someone else has done. This is what we are trying to do. We are improving on a system which needed to be improved.

We spoke about the veterans, as Senator TOOMEY has. I didn't know how veterans were treated when they came home. We are in a war which has lasted longer than 12 years and counting. There are hundreds of thousands of men and women who have put their lives on the line for us and come back with challenges. If they have been affected by this war, they are almost afraid to be evaluated because if they are not evaluated in a positive way, they could be discriminated against.

I think that is wrong unless in a process and procedure they are found to not be competent. We have 150,000 who perhaps were not notified of their rights. We need to make sure they have the appeal process available to them. When this legislation passes, every veteran coming back going through a court proceeding can say: Wait a minute. I went through a field process, and I think your evaluation is wrong.

We can't put them in a system they need to work the rest of their lives to undo. I think we owe that to our great veterans in this country. Again, it comes down to simply reading the bill, not making up things, and listening to organizations that may be using this fear tactic as a campaign to raise funds, finances, and money. I don't like to say that. I am a proud member of organizations. They do a lot of good and informing and teaching safety to young children. We do a lot of things.

I had the benefit of growing up in a town with a sportsmen's club called the Farmington Sportsmen's Club. My father was not a big sportsman, but he wanted me to be involved. He worked a lot and didn't have time. These people took me under their wing at a very young time and taught me to respect and to use firearms safely. They taught me to be totally responsible, such as when I should put a shell in the gun, when I should not put in a shell, when I should have it in my case. Also, they taught me when I should carry it in the woods and when I cross the fence the gun should be unloaded.

All of us have heard of horrific accidents. These are just little things. They ingrained this into me. A lot of these organizations do good deeds. When they put misinformation out, they do a disservice to law-abiding gun owners and the people who respect the right the second amendment provides. Senator TOOMEY has eloquently spoken about this, as well as Senator TESTER.

This is going to continue for some time, I am understanding, and we are going to be talking, Senator TOOMEY and I. We will be joined by other colleagues—Senators KIRK, SCHUMER, and TESTER—and we are inviting all of our colleagues to come down. If you have heard something from a constituent or from an organization, come down and talk to us about it. We will show you in the bill that it doesn't do what they have said.

The biggest thing we have heard is about the registration. It doesn't do that. Not only does it not do it, it even protects you more than you are protected today by law. We improve upon it. It doesn't take anybody's guns away. I think Senator TOOMEY talked about basically there are things he wouldn't vote for, nor would I. But

guess what. That is not in this bill. There will be other bills, other amendments, that all colleagues will have a chance to either support, if they are for more gun support, or oppose.

What we are saying is, this is one piece of legislation we know will make a difference by keeping guns out of the hands of those who have been adjudicated through a mental court system or a criminal court system. And we know about commercial transactions—people have used all different types of figures as to how many guns basically are transferred at a gun show or online. With the expansion of the Internet there are going to be more and more. All we are saying is that is the least personal of all transactions—on the Internet. I might not know you, Mr. President, but up in your beautiful State of Maine I may see something you have that I would like, and with the technology of this modern world today to make contact, hopefully, I would be able to purchase that. That is something I could never have done 20, 30, or 40 years ago. But I want to make sure also that gun is sent to a licensed dealer who depends on his livelihood by abiding by the law and making sure a background check is done on me before I can purchase or pick up that gun I bought from you. That only makes common sense.

I have heard a lot of things such as: Well, they can be charging a lot. Fees can be charged. We allow the person who is going to be doing that service for you to charge a fee. Let me tell you, as a businessperson, every one of us in business, especially retailers, knows exactly the value of every customer who walks through a door. You might say: Well, they are just shopping. My grandfather says: There is no such thing as a shopper. They are all buyers. They just don't know it yet. They are going to buy something. They walk through the store and they have a value. And if they have a value, you know what is going to happen? You are going to see people advertising: Please come and let us do your background check free for you. That is a service we want to give you. We want you to be right and make sure the right person gets it. And guess what. They might be buying something else. They might buy new boots or some camouflage gear for their son or buy their daughter a new outfit.

That is marketing. That is business. That is what it is all about. So don't let the naysayers say: Oh no, too much of a burden. Trust me, the markets have a unique ability to correct themselves and take advantage of a situation. As a retailer, when a customer—a buyer, not a shopper—comes through the door, we will sell them something. I know that.

So we are going to be happy to talk about this bill for a few days here. We want to invite all our colleagues down. We will be announcing the times we will be coming to the floor. In the meantime, to all of my colleagues, to all who have been hearing all of these things and getting excited about we are going to do something to take your guns away or take your rights away or register you, that is false. That is a baldfaced falsehood. All we are saying is go online and read the bill. It is only 49 pages. We have even broken it down for you. If colleagues will do that, and bring those conversations to the floor, that is all we can ask. The facts will set you free. The facts will set you free.

We have worked hard. Our staffs have worked exceedingly hard. And I appreciate everybody—my good friend Senator TOOMEY, my good friend Senator TESTER, and the other Senators; Senator KIRK from Illinois and Senator SCHUMER from New York—who has worked so hard to find a balance. It takes us all, from the right and the left, from both sides of the aisle—Republicans, Democrats, and Independents—to work together to make this an American bill. It is not just bipartisan, it is for our country. It is to save children, it is to keep our society safe, and also to protect the rights of law-abiding citizens and law-abiding gun owners such as myself and the Presiding Officer.

With that, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF BEVERLY REID O'CONNELL TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Beverly Reid O'Connell, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, since the American people first elected President Obama, Senate Republicans have been engaged in a concerted effort to filibuster, obstruct and delay his moderate judicial nominees. They have already, during the last 4 years, filibustered more of President Obama's moderate judicial nominees than were filibustered during President Bush's entire 8 years—67 percent more, in fact—and there is no dispute that President Bush was engaged in an effort to pack the courts with ideological extremists.

In connection with the wrongheaded filibuster of the nomination of Caitlin Halligan, an outstanding nominee to the DC Circuit, I urged them to abandon their misguided efforts that sacrifice outstanding judges for purposes of partisan payback. Regrettably, their response seems to be to expand their efforts through a ''wholesale filibuster'' of nominations to the DC Circuit and a legislative proposal to strip three judgeships from the DC Circuit.

I am tempted to suggest that they amend their bill to make it effective whenever the next Republican President is elected. I say that to point out that they had no concerns with supporting President Bush's four Senate-confirmed nominees to the DC Circuit. Those nominees filled the very vacancies for the 9th, 10th and even the 11th judgeship on the court that Senate Republicans are demanding be eliminated now that President Obama has been reelected by the American people. The target of this legislation seems apparent when its sponsors emphasize that it is designed to take effect immediately and acknowledge that ''[h]istorically, legislation introduced in the Senate altering the number of judgeships has most often postponed enactment until the beginning of the next President's term'' but that their legislation ''does not do this.'' It is just another foray in their concerted efforts to block this President from appointing judges to the DC Circuit.

In its April 5, 2013 letter, the Judicial Conference of the United States, chaired by Chief Justice John Roberts, sent us recommendations ''based on our current caseload needs.'' They do not recommend stripping judgeships from the DC Circuit but state that they should continue at 11. Four are currently vacant. According to the Administrative Office of U.S. Courts, the caseload per active judge for the DC Circuit has actually increased by 50 percent since 2005, when the Senate confirmed President Bush's nominee to fill the 11th seat on the DC Circuit. When the Senate confirmed Thomas Griffith, President Bush's nominee to the 11th seat in 2005, the confirmation resulted in there being approximately 119 pending cases per active DC Circuit judge. There are currently 188 pending cases for each active judge on the DC Circuit, more than 50 percent higher.

Senate Republicans also seek to misuse caseload numbers. The DC Circuit Court of Appeals is often considered ''the second most important court in the land'' because of its special jurisdiction and because of the important and complex cases that it decides. The court reviews complicated decisions

and rulemaking of many Federal agencies, and in recent years has handled some of the most important terrorism and enemy combatant and detention cases since the attacks of September 11. These cases make incredible demands on the time of the judges serving on this court. It is misleading to cite statistics and to accuse hard-working judges of having a light or easy workload. All cases are not the same and many of the hardest, most complex and most time-consuming cases in the Nation end up at the DC Circuit.

As the former Chief Judge of the DC Circuit Court of Appeals explained again recently, ''The nature of the DC Circuit's caseload is what sets it apart from other courts.'' She correctly noted in her recent column:

> The DC Circuit hears the most complex, time-consuming, labyrinthine disputes over regulations with the greatest impact on ordinary Americans' lives: clean air and water regulations, nuclear plant safety, health-care reform issues, insider trading and more. These cases can require thousands of hours of preparation by the judges, often consuming days of argument, involving hundreds of parties and interveners, and necessitating dozens of briefs and thousands of pages of record—all of which culminates in lengthy, technically intricate legal opinions.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of that article again be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

Today, the Senate will vote on only one of the 15 judicial nominees ready for final action. While I am glad that we are being allowed to fill one of the 86 judicial vacancies around the country, I wish we were allowed to make more progress more quickly. After all, there are 14 judicial nominees voted out of the Judiciary Committee without objection who are currently pending before the Senate. All members of the committee, Republicans and Democrats agreed that they were qualified and should be confirmed. Some were held over from last year. Indeed, there are still five judicial nominees pending on the Executive Calendar who could and should have been confirmed last year.

There are currently three times as many judicial nominees on the Executive Calendar as there were at this point in President Bush's second term. Of course by then the Senate had proceeded to confirm almost two dozen more judges than we have been allowed to proceed to consider. Before Senate Republicans pat themselves on the back too hard, they should help us clear the nominees backlogged from last year and acknowledge that there was just one judicial nominee confirmed this year whose hearing was held this year. The others were all nominees they needlessly held over for months and who should have been confirmed last year.

It is really incomprehensible that so many judgeships were forced to remain vacant for so long when there was no actual opposition to these consensus nominees. That is not what Democratic Senators did during the Bush administration. This is a new and destructive tactic. Despite the progress we have been allowed to make this year, we remain more than 20 circuit and district nominees behind the pace set during President Bush's administration. Just 183 of President Obama's circuit and district nominees have been confirmed, compared to 206 of President Bush's at the same point, and vacancies today are nearly double what they were in April 2005. We can make up much of that ground if Senate Republicans would just agree to a vote on all 15 nominees currently pending on the Executive Calendar. All of them received bipartisan support in committee, and all but one were unanimous. There is no good reason for further delay.

At this point in President Bush's presidency, when his district nominees were reported by the Judiciary Committee, it took, on average, just 35 days for them to receive a vote. The comparable average for President Obama's district court nominees is nearly three times as long, 102 days. This number is has a firm foundation—arithmetic. It is derived simply by adding up the number of days each nominee waited and dividing by the number of nominees. That is how an average is calculated.

During President Bush's first term alone, 57 district nominees were confirmed within just 1 week of being reported. By contrast, during his first 4 years only two of President Obama's district nominees have been confirmed within a week of being reported by the Committee. Just before the Thanksgiving recess in 2009, when Senator SESSIONS of Alabama was the ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee, we were able to get Republican agreement to confirm Judge Abdul Kallon, a nominee from Alabama, and Judge Christina Reiss, our Chief Judge for the Federal District Court for the District of Vermont. They had their hearing on November 4, were voted on by the Judiciary Committee 2 weeks later on November 19, and were confirmed by the Senate on November 21. They were not stalled on the Senate Executive Calendar without a vote for weeks and months. They were confirmed 2 days after the vote by the Judiciary Committee. That should be the standard we follow, not be the exception. It should not take being from the ranking Republican's home State to be promptly confirmed as a noncontroversial judicial nominee.

Digging deeper into the numbers, the Congressional Research Service has found that during President Bush's first term, 85 percent of his district nominees waited 60 days or fewer for a vote. In President Obama's first term, 78 percent of his district nominees waited 60 days or longer. What these data show is that President Obama's district nominees have been facing unprecedented delays. There is an undeniable pattern of Republican obstruction and delay that has faced district nominees during the last four years, a pattern that is without precedent.

While these delays and backlogs are without precedent, Republicans point to April 2004 as the one time that there were a number of President Bush's nominees pending on the floor. Of course back in April 2004, President Bush had bypassed the Senate and recess appointed two individuals to be circuit judges, while Republican Committee staff hacked into a shared server to pilfer Democratic files. Still, we were able to clear the backlog that resulted by confirming more than 20 consensus nominees in just 1 month. There is nothing like that to explain the years of backlogged judicial nominees during this administration. In truth, 17 of the judicial nominations for which Senate Republicans take credit over the past 2 years should have been confirmed more than 2 years ago in the preceding Congress. They allowed only 60 judicial confirmations to take place during President Obama's first 2 years in office, the lowest total for a President in over 30 years. This is not a new phenomenon. During President Obama's first year in office, Senate Republicans stalled all but 12 of his circuit and district nominees. That was the lowest 1-year confirmation total since the Eisenhower administration, when the Federal bench was barely one-third the size it is today.

The fact is that we have these 15 nominees waiting for a vote. All Senate Democrats are prepared to vote on all of them today.

Before Republicans take refuge in the number of vacancies without a nominee, they should be honest about their slow-walking the President on recommendations for nominees from their home States. For example, there are 24 emergency vacancies in States represented by Republican Senators. Over 40 percent of all judicial emergency vacancies are in just 3 States, each of which is represented by 2 Republican Senators. Those Senators should be working with the White House to fill those vacancies. I encourage Republican Senators to work with this President, just as I encouraged Democratic Senators to work with President Bush, to find good nominees for those important vacancies and to allow qualified nominees to move forward. I take very seriously our responsibilities of both advice and consent on nominations.

Today, the Senate is being allowed to confirm Judge Beverly O'Connell to a judicial emergency vacancy on the Federal trial court for the Central District of California, one of the busiest courts in the Nation. She currently serves on the Superior Court for the County of Los Angeles in California, where she has served for the last 8 years. She is also currently an Adjunct Professor of Law at Loyola Law School and at Pepperdine University School of Law. Prior to becoming a judge, she served in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California for 10

years and worked in private practice as an associate at Morrison & Foerster LLP. She received the ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary's highest possible rating, unanimously ''well qualified,'' and has the support of her home State Senators, Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator BOXER. She originally had her hearing last December, was unanimously approved by the Judiciary Committee, will be overwhelming approved by the Senate, and should and could have been confirmed last year.

Finally, last month, I spoke about the damaging effect of sequestration on our Federal courts and our system of justice and how these indiscriminate cuts have caused both Federal prosecutors and Federal public defenders to be furloughed. The effects have become all too real as even terrorism prosecutions are being delayed. Chief Judge Loretta Preska of the Southern District of New York called these cuts ''devastating.'' The head of the Federal Defenders Office stated: ''On a good day, we're stretched thin. . . . Sequestration takes us well beyond the breaking point. You simply can't sequester the Sixth Amendment.'' He is right. Sequestration is causing grave harm to our judicial system. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of an article dated April 8 be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my statement.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 28, 2013]

SENATE MUST ACT ON APPEALS COURT VACANCIES

(By Patricia M. Wald)

Patricia M. Wald, who is retired, served as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit from 1979 to 1999, including five years as chief judge.

Pending before the Senate are nominations to fill two of the four vacant judgeships on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. This court has exclusive jurisdiction over many vital national security challenges and hears the bulk of appeals from the major regulatory agencies of the federal government. Aside from the U.S. Supreme Court, it resolves more constitutional questions involving separation of powers and executive prerogatives than any court in the country.

The D.C. Circuit has 11 judgeships but only seven active judges. There is cause for extreme concern that Congress is systematically denying the court the human resources it needs to carry out its weighty mandates.

The court's vacancies date to 2005, and it has not received a new appointment since 2006. The number of pending cases per judge has grown from 119 in 2005 to 188 today. A great many of these are not easy cases. The D.C. Circuit hears the most complex, time-consuming, labyrinthine disputes over regulations with the greatest impact on ordinary Americans' lives: clean air and water regulations, nuclear plant safety, healthcare reform issues, insider trading and more. These cases can require thousands of hours of preparation by the judges, often consuming days of argument, involving hundreds of parties and interveners, and necessitating dozens of briefs and thousands of pages of record—all of which culminates in lengthy, technically intricate legal opinions.

I served on the D.C. Circuit for more than 20 years and as its chief judge for almost five. My colleagues and I worked as steadily and intensively as judges on other circuits even if they may have heard more cases. The nature of the D.C. Circuit's caseload is what sets it apart from other courts. The U.S. Judicial Conference reviews this caseload periodically and makes recommendations to Congress about the court's structure. In 2009, the conference recommended, based on its review, that the circuit's 12th judgeship be eliminated. This apolitical process is the proper way to determine the circuit's needs, rather than in the more highly charged context of individual confirmations.

During my two-decade tenure, 11 active judges were sitting a majority of the time; today, the court has only 64 percent of its authorized active judges. This precipitous decline manifests in the way the court operates. And while the D.C. Circuit has five senior judges, they may opt out of the most complex regulatory cases and do not sit en banc. They also choose the periods during which they will sit, which can affect the randomization of assignment of judges to cases.

There is, moreover, a subtle constitutional dynamic at work here: The president nominates and the Senate confirms federal judges for life. While some presidents may not encounter any vacancies during their administration, over time the constitutional schemata ensures that the makeup of courts reflects the choices of changing presidents and the ''advise and consent'' of changing Senates. Since the circuit courts' structure was established in 1948, President Obama is the first president not to have a single judge confirmed to the D.C. Circuit during his first full term. The constitutional system of nomination and confirmation can work only if there is good faith on the part of both the president and the Senate to move qualified nominees along, rather than withholding consent for political reasons. I recall my own difficult confirmation 35 years ago as the first female judge on the circuit; eminent senators such as Barry Goldwater, Thad Cochran and Alan Simpson voted to confirm me regardless of differences in party or general political philosophy.

The two D.C. Circuit nominees before the Senate are exceedingly well qualified. Caitlin Halligan served as my law clerk during the 1995–96 term, working on cases involving the Department of Health and Human Services, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Federal Communications Commission and diverse other topics. She later clerked for Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer. She also served as New York solicitor general and general counsel for the Manhattan district attorney's office, as well as being a partner in a major law firm. The other nominee, Sri Srinivasan, has similarly impressive credentials and a reputation that surely merits prompt and serious consideration of his nomination.

There is a tradition in the D.C. Circuit of spirited differences among judges on the most important legal issues of our time. My experience, however, was that deliberations generally focused on the legal and real-world consequences of decisions and reflected a premium on rational thinking and intellectual prowess, not personal philosophy or policy preferences. It is in that vein that I urge the Senate to confirm the two pending nominations to the D.C. Circuit, so that this eminent court can live up to its full potential in our country's judicial work.

[From the New York Times, Apr. 8, 2013]

CITING CUTS, LAWYERS SEEK RELIEF IN TERRORISM CASE

(By Benjamin Weiser)

Federal public defenders who are representing a son-in-law of Osama bin Laden on terrorism charges urged a judge on Monday not to hold an early trial because automatic government budget cuts were requiring furloughs of lawyers in their office.

The request, which seemed to take the judge, Lewis A. Kaplan, by surprise, follows requests that five or six federal judges in Manhattan have received from public defenders to be relieved from cases in the wake of the automatic cuts, known as sequestration, said Loretta A. Preska, the chief judge of the Federal District Court in Manhattan.

''It's devastating,'' Judge Preska said late Monday. She praised the work of the federal defenders and said their replacement in cases with publicly paid court-appointed lawyers would probably lead to delays and higher costs.

Judge Kaplan said in court on Monday that he was considering holding the trial of bin Laden's son-in-law, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith—a onetime Al Qaeda spokesman charged with conspiring to kill Americans—in September. After the defense requested a later date, he said: ''It's extremely troublesome to contemplate the possibility of a case of this nature being delayed because of sequestration. Let me say only that—stunning.''

The judge did not set a trial date, saying he would consider the request, but the exchange shows how the forced budget cuts are beginning to have an effect on the administration of justice in federal courts in New York.

About 30 trial lawyers with the federal defenders office handle around 2,000 criminal cases a year in federal courts in Manhattan, Brooklyn and other locations, according to David E. Patton, who heads the office.

The forced cuts, he said, will mean each lawyer in the office will be furloughed for five and a half weeks through the end of September, when the fiscal year ends.

''On a good day, we're stretched thin,'' Mr. Patton said. ''Sequestration takes us well beyond the breaking point. You simply can't sequester the Sixth Amendment.''

''Investigations have to be conducted,'' Mr. Patton added. ''Evidence must be reviewed. Law must be researched. Those things don't just happen by themselves.''

In seeking the delay, lawyers for Mr. Abu Ghaith, who was arraigned in March, cited the need for overseas investigation, the translation of voluminous materials and other issues. ''We would urge the court to find a later date,'' one lawyer, Martin Cohen, said.

Judge Preska said that lawyers had been allowed to leave one of the cases in which the furlough problem had been cited; the issue is pending in the others.

Newly appointed lawyers would have to ''get up to speed'' on their cases, and because they are paid by the hour (federal defenders are salaried), the public would probably end up paying more, Judge Preska said. ''There's no resolution,'' she said. ''Time is of the essence, and we're very, very concerned.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, in the midst of another tragic occurrence in our country, where we are all holding our breath to learn the facts, and praying, I wanted to say the business of the Senate is moving forward in terms of judges and how important it is to have judges in place so criminals can be prosecuted and justice is served.

Tonight in front of the Senate is Judge Beverly Reid O'Connell to be district court judge for the Central District Court of California. Judge Reid O'Connell was approved in the Judiciary Committee by a voice vote. She has

had a very diverse legal career. She served as an exemplary superior court judge in Los Angeles. She will be an excellent addition to the Federal bench. She is a lifelong Southern Californian. She grew up in Northridge, where she was valedictorian of her high school. She went on to attend UCLA and Pepperdine Law School, where she was managing editor of the Law Review and graduated magna cum laude.

She began her career in private practice, spending 5 years as an associate at Morrison and Foerster. In 1995, she joined the Department of Justice as an assistant U.S. attorney, where she spent 10 years gaining critical criminal law and trial experience.

Judge O'Connell excelled as an assistant U.S. attorney. She was the deputy chief of the general crimes section, responsible for supervising all the attorneys in the criminal division. She was the lead attorney on a case that led to the indictment of the highest ranking member of a major drug trafficking organization on U.S. soil.

For her work on this case she was awarded the DEA Administrator's Award for Exceptional Service.

She has also received numerous other awards from the DEA, FBI, and local governments.

She was appointed Superior Court Judge in Los Angeles in 2005 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Judge O'Connell is the Assistant Supervising Judge of the North Valley Judicial District where she is responsible for supervising 3 court houses and 22 bench officers.

An expert in criminal law, she presides over all aspects of felony criminal cases before the Superior Court.

In addition to being well-respected for her demeanor on the bench and her stellar legal intellect, she is known by her colleagues as a great manager and supervisor, attributes which will serve her well at the busy central district.

Judge Reid O'Connell is also very active in the Southern California legal community.

She created a program that brings inner-city students to the Superior Court to educate them about the legal process and to spend time with judges and lawyers.

She also teaches continuing education courses to California judges on criminal law, and is an adjunct professor at the law schools of Pepperdine and Loyola.

Judge Reid O'Connell received the ABA's highest possible rating—unanimously ''well qualified and they said she will make an excellent Federal judge.

While we are in the midst of some very contentious debates—and I hope and pray we will move forward with the background check amendment that was crafted by our colleagues Senator MANCHIN and Senator TOOMEY—and while we are worried about everything that has happened in the country, particularly what has happened today at the Boston Marathon, I know we can move forward tonight because we need to make sure we have qualified judges on the benches to deal with crimes, to deal with justice every single day.

I believe Judge Reid O'Connell is a wonderful choice for these very difficult times and I urge my colleagues to support her nomination.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to express my strong support for Superior Court Judge Beverly Reid O'Connell's nomination to be a district judge for the Central District of California.

Born in Ventura, CA, Judge O'Connell graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1986 and earned her law degree from Pepperdine University School of Law magna cum laude in 1990. She was managing editor of the Pepperdine Law Review.

Following law school, she worked on complex civil litigation in private practice at the law firm Morrison & Foerster for 5 years. She then joined the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Central District of California, where she served for 10 years, from 1995 through 2005. She handled a number of high profile cases, such as the prosecution of a high ranking member of the Arellano Felix drug cartel.

She was appointed to the Superior Court by former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2005. She has been an outstanding judge, presiding over literally thousands of cases and approximately 150 jury trials. She also has been a proven administrator, serving with great skill as an assistant supervising judge for the North Valley District of the Superior Court.

Simply put, Judge O'Connell has outstanding credentials and an impeccable reputation, and she has received a rating of ''well qualified'' from the American Bar Association—the ABA's highest rating.

I will conclude by saying that I have met with Judge O'Connell, and I have no doubt she will be an excellent addition to the Central District.

I commend Senator BOXER for recommending such a fine candidate to President Obama, and I am pleased her nomination is on the floor today. I hope my colleagues will support her nomination.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, before I yield the floor I want to say, for the note of anyone who has been following that on Monday nights I usually speak about climate change, I am not going to do this tonight. I am going to put that off until next week.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BOSTON MARATHON TRAGEDY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I, like every Member of the Senate, am shocked and saddened by the news from Boston today. There were explosions near the finish line at the Boston Marathon. My thoughts go out to all those who were injured, and my condolences go to the families and friends of those affected by this tragedy.

I commend the first responders and the observers who rushed toward danger to help those who were hurt. We will continue to monitor the news from Boston.

President Obama has spoken to a number of people, including the mayor of Boston and Governor Deval Patrick. They have pledged every resource available to help those who were affected and to find and bring to justice the perpetrators. The President will be speaking to the Nation in about 20 minutes.

I will do whatever I can to support the people of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as we all will, during this difficult time.

I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back on the nomination, and following a moment of silence in observance of the tragic events which took place in Boston earlier today, the Senate then proceed to vote on the confirmation of the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the Senate will observe a moment of silence.

(Moment of Silence.)

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Beverly Reid O'Connell to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California?

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 96 Ex.]

YEAS—92

Alexander	Baucus	Blumenthal
Baldwin	Begich	Blunt
Barrasso	Bennet	Boozman

Boxer
Brown
Burr
Cantwell
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Chambliss
Coats
Cochran
Collins
Coons
Corker
Cornyn
Cowan
Crapo
Cruz
Donnelly
Durbin
Enzi
Feinstein
Fischer
Flake
Franken
Gillibrand
Grassley
Hagan
Harkin
Hatch
Heinrich
Heller
Hirono
Inhofe
Isakson
Johanns
Johnson (SD)
Johnson (WI)
Kaine
King
Kirk
Klobuchar
Landrieu
Leahy
Lee
Levin
Manchin
McCain
McCaskill
McConnell
Menendez
Merkley
Mikulski
Moran
Murkowski
Murphy
Murray
Nelson
Paul
Portman
Pryor
Reed
Reid
Risch
Roberts
Rockefeller
Rubio
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Scott
Sessions
Shaheen
Shelby
Stabenow
Tester
Thune
Toomey
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Warner
Whitehouse
Wicker
Wyden

NOT VOTING—8

Ayotte
Coburn
Graham
Heitkamp
Hoeven
Lautenberg
Vitter
Warren

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

WORLD WAR II VETERANS VISIT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President. On April 21, 88 World War II veterans from Montana will be visiting our Nation's Capital.

With a great deal of honor and respect, I extend a hearty Montana welcome to each and every one of them.

Together, they will visit the World War II Memorial and share stories about their service. This journey will no doubt bring about a lot of memories. I hope it will give them a deep sense of pride as well.

What they achieved together almost 70 years ago was remarkable. That memorial is a testament to the fact that a grateful nation will never forget what they did or what they sacrificed. To us, they were our greatest generation. They left the comforts of their family and their communities to confront evil from Iwo Jima to Bastogne. Together, they won the war in the Pacific by defeating an empire and liberated a continent by destroying Hitler and the Nazis.

To them, they were simply doing their jobs. They enlisted in unprecedented numbers to defend our freedoms and our values. They represented the very best of us and made us proud.

From a young age, I remember playing the bugle at the memorial services of veterans of the first two World Wars. It instilled in me a profound sense of respect that I will never forget.

Honoring the service of every generation of American veterans is a Montana value. I deeply appreciate the work of the Big Sky Honor Flight, the nonprofit organization that made this trip possible.

To the World War II veterans making the trip, I salute you. We will always be grateful, and we will never forget your service or your sacrifice.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ANNA JO GARCIA HAYNES

• Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate Anna Jo Garcia Haynes, a remarkable Coloradan, who has made helping kids her life's work. Anna Jo rises every morning and before she greets the day, asks, ''What can I do to improve the lives of kids today?'' She began her work with the founding of the Mile High Montessori Early Learning Center, which operates eight centers in Denver's inner city for children from families with limited resources.

Anna Jo has received many accolades over her career, and she has been recognized by foundations, elected officials, including both houses of the Colorado legislature, and many others. She is often praised with flowery language and many whereas clauses to acknowledge her service to Colorado's kids.

I know that Anna Jo would want me to say in my remarks today that she is very proud of her humble, pioneer roots in Colorado and that she raised five children, who were secure in their mother's love and grew up to become leaders in their own right. She would further want me to say that she lives for kids—and has worked to create hope and success for kids who were not born into educational or economic opportunity but who have achieved it due to the programs she has worked to create and support.

This month, Anna Jo is receiving due recognition from the Girls Athletic Leadership School in Denver, CO, for being a champion for Colorado education. I join the Girls Athletic Leadership School and the State of Colorado in thanking Anna Jo for working to create educational opportunity and for enriching our community and our State. I look forward to whatever Anna Jo tackles in the future and the positive influence she will continue to have in our community.•

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, 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 RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2013, the Secretary of the Senate, on April 12, 2013, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 716. An act to modify the requirements under the STOCK Act regarding online access to certain financial disclosure statements and related forms.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2013, the Secretary of the Senate, on April 12, 2013, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 716. An act to modify the requirements under the STOCK Act regarding online access to certain financial disclosure statements and related forms.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2013, the enrolled bill was subsequently signed on April 12, 2013, during the adjournment of the Senate, by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:05 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 678. An act to authorize all Bureau of Reclamation conduit facilities for hydropower development under Federal Reclamation law, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1120. An act to prohibit the National Labor Relations Board from taking any action that requires a quorum of the members of the Board until such time as Board constituting a quorum shall have been confirmed by the Senate, the Supreme Court issues a decision on the constitutionality of the appointments to the Board made in January 2012, or the adjournment sine die of the first session of the 113th Congress.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following resolution:

H. Res. 142. Resolution relative to the election of Members to Joint Committee of Congress on the Library and Joint Committee on Printing.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 678. An act to authorize all Bureau of Reclamation conduit facilities for hydropower development under Federal Reclamation law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 1120. An act to prohibit the National Labor Relations Board from taking any action that requires a quorum of the members of the Board until such time as Board constituting a quorum shall have been confirmed by the Senate, the Supreme Court issues a decision on the constitutionality of the appointments to the Board made in January 2012, or the adjournment sine die of the first session of the 113th Congress; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bills were read the first time:

S. 729. A bill to protect law abiding citizens by preventing criminals from obtaining firearms.

S. 730. A bill to prevent criminals from obtaining firearms through straw purchasing and trafficking.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on April 12, 2013, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 716. An act to modify the requirements under the STOCK Act regarding online access to certain financial disclosure statements and related forms.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. LEVIN, from the Committee on Armed Services:

Special Report entitled ''Inquiry Into U.S. Costs and Allied Contributions to Support the U.S. Military Presence Overseas'' (Rept. No . 113–12).

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. THUNE (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 720. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for taxpayers making donations with their returns of income tax to the Federal Government to pay down the public debt; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 721. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require a provider of a commercial mobile service or an IP-enabled voice service to provide call location information concerning the user of such a service to law enforcement agencies in order to respond to a call for emergency services or in an emergency situation that involves risk of death or serious physical harm; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 722. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to study the feasibility of providing certain taxpayers with an optional pre-prepared tax return, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 723. A bill to require the Commissioner of Social Security to revise the medical and evaluation criteria for determining disability in a person diagnosed with Huntington's Disease and to waive the 24-month waiting period for Medicare eligibility for individuals disabled by Huntington's Disease; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 724. A bill to provide flexibility to agencies on determining what employees are essential personnel in implementing the sequester; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 725. A bill to provide a taxpayer bill of rights for small businesses; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 726. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide health care practitioners in rural areas with training in preventive health care, including both physical and mental care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 727. A bill to improve the examination of depository institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 728. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the exclusion from gross income for employer-provided health coverage for employees' spouses and dependent children to coverage provided to other eligible designated beneficiaries of employees; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. LEE, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 729. A bill to protect law abiding citizens by preventing criminals from obtaining firearms; read the first time.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 730. A bill to prevent criminals from obtaining firearms through straw purchasing and trafficking; read the first time.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. Res. 97. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Food and Drug Administration should encourage the use of abuse-deterrent formulations of drugs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 84

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 84, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 135

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 135, a bill to amend title X of the Public Health Service Act to prohibit family planning grants from being awarded to any entity that performs abortions, and for other purposes.

S. 195

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 195, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to revise and extend projects relating to children and violence to provide access to school-based comprehensive mental health programs.

S. 232

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 232, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 296

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 296, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate discrimination in the immigration laws by permitting permanent partners of United States citizens and lawful permanent residents to obtain lawful permanent resident status in the same manner as spouses of citizens and lawful permanent residents and to penalize immigration fraud in connection with permanent partnerships.

S. 309

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 309, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the Civil Air Patrol.

S. 313

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 313, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the tax treatment of ABLE accounts established under State programs for the care of family members with disabilities, and for other purposes.

S. 367

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 367, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 448

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor

of S. 448, a bill to allow seniors to file their Federal income tax on a new Form 1040SR.

S. 450

At the request of Mr. SHELBY, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 450, a bill to require enhanced economic analysis and justification of regulations proposed by certain Federal banking, housing, securities, and commodity regulators, and for other purposes.

S. 453

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 453, a bill to require that certain Federal job training and career education programs give priority to programs that lead to an industry-recognized and nationally portable credential.

S. 458

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 458, a bill to improve and extend certain nutrition programs.

S. 462

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 462, a bill to enhance the strategic partnership between the United States and Israel.

S. 464

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 464, a bill to declare English as the official language of the United States, to establish a uniform English language rule for naturalization, and to avoid misconstructions of the English language texts of the laws of the United States, pursuant to Congress' powers to provide for the general welfare of the United States and to establish a uniform rule of naturalization under article I, section 8, of the Constitution.

S. 470

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 470, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require that the Purple Heart occupy a position of precedence above the new Distinguished Warfare Medal.

S. 471

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 471, a bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to require the inclusion of credit scores with free annual credit reports provided to consumers, and for other purposes.

S. 480

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 480, a bill to improve the effectiveness of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System by clarifying reporting requirements related to adjudications of mental incompetency, and for other purposes.

S. 505

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 505, a bill to prohibit the use of drones to kill citizens of the United States within the United States.

S. 509

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 509, a bill to provide for the conveyance of certain parcels of National Forest System land to the city of Fruit Heights, Utah.

S. 510

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 510, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain interests in Federal land acquired for the Scofield Project in Carbon County, Utah.

S. 516

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 516, a bill to reduce disparities and improve access to effective and cost efficient diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer through advances in testing, research, and education, including through telehealth, comparative effectiveness research, and identification of best practices in patient education and outreach particularly with respect to underserved racial, ethnic and rural populations and men with a family history of prostate cancer, to establish a directive on what constitutes clinically appropriate prostate cancer imaging, and to create a prostate cancer scientific advisory board for the Office of the Chief Scientist at the Food and Drug Administration to accelerate real-time sharing of the latest research and accelerate movement of new medicines to patients.

S. 517

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 517, a bill to promote consumer choice and wireless competition by permitting consumers to unlock mobile wireless devices, and for other purposes.

S. 545

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 545, a bill to improve hydropower, and for other purposes.

S. 579

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 579, a bill to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain observer status for Taiwan at the triennial International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly, and for other purposes.

S. 603

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 603, a bill to repeal the annual fee on health insurance providers enacted by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 617

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 617, a bill to provide humanitarian assistance and support a democratic transition in Syria, and for other purposes.

S. 628

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 628, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to extend the duration of the Physical Disability Board of Review and to the expand the authority of such Board to review of the separation of members of the Armed Forces on the basis of mental condition not amounting to disability, including separation on the basis of a personality or adjustment disorder.

S. 629

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 629, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize the service in the reserve components of the Armed Forces of certain persons by honoring them with status as veterans under law, and for other purposes.

S. 635

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. 635, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 679

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 679, a bill to promote local and regional farm and food systems, and for other purposes.

S. 687

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 687, a bill to prohibit the closing of air traffic control towers, and for other purposes.

S. 689

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the

Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 689, a bill to reauthorize and improve programs related to mental health and substance use disorders.

S. 700

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) were added as cosponsors of S. 700, a bill to ensure that the education and training provided members of the Armed Forces and veterans better assists members and veterans in obtaining civilian certifications and licenses, and for other purposes.

S. 710

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) were added as cosponsors of S. 710, a bill to provide exemptions from municipal advisor registration requirements.

S. RES. 65

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 65, a resolution strongly supporting the full implementation of United States and international sanctions on Iran and urging the President to continue to strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 725. A bill to provide a taxpayer bill of rights for small businesses; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise to reintroduce the Small Business Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2013, SBTBOR.

As millions of taxpayers across the country race to meet today's deadline to file their Federal tax return, it is important to note that their tax burden is more than just the amount of tax paid to the Federal Government. Taxpayers also bear the compliance cost of complying with a byzantine tax code. Analysts predict that taxpayers will spend over $350 billion this year alone to comply with the tax code. An analysis of IRS data by the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate shows it takes taxpayers more than 6.1 billion hours to compete filings required by a tax code that contains almost four million words and that, on average, has more than one new provision added to it daily.

A dispute over a complex tax code with the IRS can become an expensive endeavor for small businesses, who have limited resources to fight off frivolous IRS claims. With the passage of the 2010 health care act, this burden is expected to increase in the future. At a time when job creation remains weak, small businesses should be spending their time and resources creating jobs, not cutting through miles of burdensome IRS red tape. The Small Business Taxpayer Bill of Rights seeks to mitigate this problem. It would ensure that small businesses spend less time dealing with the IRS and more time creating jobs.

The Small Business Taxpayer Bill of Rights, among other things, provides more protections and safeguards for small businesses during administrative procedures with the IRS. It would lower the compliance burden on small business taxpayers; strengthen safeguards against IRS overreach; increase taxpayer compensation for IRS abuses and; improve taxpayer access to the court system. Amid the weakest economic recovery since World War II, American job creators urgently need such relief.

The Small Business Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act will reduce the compliance and administrative burdens faced by small business taxpayers when it comes to dealing with the IRS. The bill provides an alternative dispute resolution procedure through which a small business taxpayer may be able to request arbitration with an independent, neutral third party not employed by the IRS. In addition, the bill will make more small businesses eligible to recoup attorney's fees when a court finds that the IRS's action taken against a taxpayer is not substantially justified.

The legislation also reinforces the independent nature of the IRS Appeals Office by prohibiting it from discussing the merits of a taxpayer's case with any other department at the IRS, unless the taxpayer is afforded an opportunity to participate. Second, the bill will prevent an Appeals Officer from raising a new issue that was not initially raised by the IRS in the examination process. The SBTBOR would help to ensure the Appeals Office remains a neutral entity that effectively facilitates the taxpayer's appeals process.

The Small Business Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act will make the IRS more accountable to taxpayers by increasing the amount of damages taxpayers may receive for any collection action the IRS takes against them that is reckless, or by reason of negligence disregards the law or its regulations. Second, it increases the amount of damages taxpayers may be awarded when the IRS improperly discloses their tax returns and tax information. Third, the bill raises the monetary penalty on IRS employees who commit certain unlawful acts or disclose taxpayer information.

Finally, the legislation will improve taxpayer access to the Tax Court by expanding the role of the current ''small tax case'' procedure—an informal and efficient method for resolving disputes before the Tax Court—to include a wider variety of cases. The bill will permit taxpayers to obtain judicial review from the Tax Court when the IRS fails to act on their claim for interest abatement due to an error or delay by the IRS. And taxpayers whose property has been wrongly seized to satisfy a tax debt will have more time to claim relief and bring a civil suit against the IRS. It also makes procedural improvements for taxpayers who request innocent spouse relief. By requesting innocent spouse relief, taxpayers can be relieved of the responsibility for paying tax, interest, and penalties if their spouse improperly reported items or omitted items on their tax return.

This legislation is also supported by the Texas Association of Business, National Federation of Independent Business, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Americans for Tax Reform, and the National Taxpayers Union, among others.

Small business owners face an especially crushing burden of paperwork, but they lack the key financial and legal resources that multinational corporations do when dealing with the tax code and the IRS. This legislation will provide relief for small businesses and will allow small businesses to spend more time expanding their business and creating jobs and less time dealing with the IRS.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill and a letter of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 725

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 ''Small Business Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2013''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Modification of standards for awarding of costs and certain fees.
Sec. 3. Civil damages allowed for reckless or intentional disregard of internal revenue laws.
Sec. 4. Modifications relating to certain offenses by officers and employees in connection with revenue laws.
Sec. 5. Modifications relating to civil damages for unauthorized inspection or disclosure of returns and return information.
Sec. 6. Interest abatement reviews.
Sec. 7. Ban on ex parte discussions.
Sec. 8. Alternative dispute resolution procedures.
Sec. 9. Extension of time for contesting IRS levy.
Sec. 10. Waiver of installment agreement fee.
Sec. 11. Suspension of running of period for filing petition of spousal relief and collection cases.
Sec. 12. Venue for appeal of spousal relief and collection cases.
Sec. 13. Increase in monetary penalties for certain unauthorized disclosures of information.
Sec. 14. De novo tax court review of claims for equitable innocent spouse relief.
Sec. 15. Ban on raising new issues on appeal.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF STANDARDS FOR AWARDING OF COSTS AND CERTAIN FEES.

(a) SMALL BUSINESSES ELIGIBLE WITHOUT REGARD TO NET WORTH.—Subparagraph (D)

of section 7430(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of clause (i), by striking the period at the end of clause (ii) and inserting ''and'', and by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(iii) in the case of an eligible small business, the net worth limitation in clause (ii) of such section shall not apply.''.

(b) ELIGIBLE SMALL BUSINESS.—Paragraph (4) of section 7430(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(F) ELIGIBLE SMALL BUSINESS.—For purposes of subparagraph (D)(iii), the term 'eligible small business' means, with respect to any proceeding commenced in a taxable year—

''(i) a corporation the stock of which is not publicly traded,

''(ii) a partnership, or

''(iii) a sole proprietorship,

if the average annual gross receipts of such corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship for the 3-taxable-year period preceding such taxable year does not exceed $50,000,000. For purposes of applying the test under the preceding sentence, rules similar to the rules of paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 448(c) shall apply.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to proceedings commenced after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. CIVIL DAMAGES ALLOWED FOR RECKLESS OR INTENTIONAL DISREGARD OF INTERNAL REVENUE LAWS.

(a) INCREASE IN AMOUNT OF DAMAGES.—Section 7433(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$1,000,000 ($100,000, in the case of negligence)'' and inserting ''$3,000,000 ($300,000, in the case of negligence)''.

(b) EXTENSION OF TIME TO BRING ACTION.—Section 7433(d)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''2 years'' and inserting ''5 years''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to actions of employees of the Internal Revenue Service after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. MODIFICATIONS RELATING TO CERTAIN OFFENSES BY OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES IN CONNECTION WITH REVENUE LAWS.

(a) INCREASE IN PENALTY.—Section 7214 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by striking ''$10,000'' in subsection (a) and inserting ''$25,000'', and

(2) by striking ''$5,000'' in subsection (b) and inserting ''$10,000''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5. MODIFICATIONS RELATING TO CIVIL DAMAGES FOR UNAUTHORIZED INSPECTION OR DISCLOSURE OF RETURNS AND RETURN INFORMATION.

(a) INCREASE IN AMOUNT OF DAMAGES.—Subparagraph (A) of section 7431(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$1,000'' and inserting ''$10,000''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to inspections and disclosure occurring on and after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 6. INTEREST ABATEMENT REVIEWS.

(a) FILING PERIOD FOR INTEREST ABATEMENT CASES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (h) of section 6404 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) by striking ''REVIEW OF DENIAL'' in the heading and inserting ''JUDICIAL REVIEW'', and

(B) by striking '''if such action is brought''' and all that follows in paragraph (1) and inserting ''if such action is brought—

''(A) at any time after the earlier of—

''(i) the date of the mailing of the Secretary's final determination not to abate such interest, or

''(ii) the date which is 180 days after the date of the filing with the Secretary (in such form as the Secretary may prescribe) of a claim for abatement under this section, and

''(B) not later than the date which is 180 days after the date described in subparagraph (A)(i).''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to claims for abatement of interest filed with the Secretary after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) SMALL TAX CASE ELECTION FOR INTEREST ABATEMENT CASES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (f) of section 7463 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (1),

(B) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (2) and inserting '', and'', and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) a petition to the Tax court under section 6404(h) in which the amount of interest abatement sought does not exceed $50,000.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to—

(A) cases pending as of the day after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(B) cases commenced after such date of enactment.

SEC. 7. BAN ON EX PARTE DISCUSSIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 1001(a)(4) of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998, the Internal Revenue Service shall prohibit any ex parte communications between officers in the Internal Revenue Service Office of Appeals and other Internal Revenue Service employees with respect to any matter pending before such officers.

(b) TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR MISCONDUCT.—Subject to subsection (c), the Commissioner of Internal Revenue shall terminate the employment of any employee of the Internal Revenue Service if there is a final administrative or judicial determination that such employee committed any act or omission prohibited under subsection (a) in the performance of the employee's official duties. Such termination shall be a removal for cause on charges of misconduct.

(c) DETERMINATION OF COMMISSIONER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of Internal Revenue may take a personnel action other than termination for an act prohibited under subsection (a).

(2) DISCRETION.—The exercise of authority under paragraph (1) shall be at the sole discretion of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and may not be delegated to any other officer. The Commissioner of Internal Revenue, in his sole discretion, may establish a procedure which will be used to determine whether an individual should be referred to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue for a determination by the Commissioner under paragraph (1).

(3) NO APPEAL.—Any determination of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue under this subsection may not be appealed in any administrative or judicial proceeding.

(d) TIGTA REPORTING OF TERMINATION OR MITIGATION.—Section 7803(d)(1)(E) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting ''or section 7 of the Small Business Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2013'' after ''1998''.

SEC. 8. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7123 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) AVAILABILITY OF DISPUTE RESOLUTIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The procedures prescribed under subsection (b)(1) and the pilot program established under subsection (b)(2) shall provide that a taxpayer may request mediation or arbitration in any case unless the Secretary has specifically excluded the type of issue involved in such case or the class of cases to which such case belongs as not appropriate for resolution under such subsection. The Secretary shall make any determination that excludes a type of issue or a class of cases public within 5 working days and provide an explanation for each determination.

''(2) INDEPENDENT MEDIATORS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The procedures prescribed under subsection (b)(1) shall provide the taxpayer an opportunity to elect to have the mediation conducted by an independent, neutral individual not employed by the Office of Appeals.

''(B) COST AND SELECTION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Any taxpayer making an election under subparagraph (A) shall be required—

''(I) to share the costs of such independent mediator equally with the Office of Appeals, and

''(II) to limit the selection of the mediator to a roster of recognized national or local neutral mediators.

''(ii) EXCEPTION.—Clause (i)(I) shall not apply to any taxpayer who is an individual or who was a small business in the preceding calendar year if such taxpayer had an adjusted gross income that did not exceed 250 percent of the poverty level, as determined in accordance with criteria established by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in the taxable year preceding the request.

''(iii) SMALL BUSINESS.—For purposes of clause (ii), the term 'small business' has the meaning given such term under section 41(b)(3)(D)(iii).

''(3) AVAILABILITY OF PROCESS.—The procedures prescribed under subsection (b)(1) and the pilot program established under subsection (b)(2) shall provide the opportunity to elect mediation or arbitration at the time when the case is first filed with the Office of Appeals and at any time before deliberations in the appeal commence.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 9. EXTENSION OF TIME FOR CONTESTING IRS LEVY.

(a) EXTENSION OF TIME FOR RETURN OF PROPERTY SUBJECT TO LEVY.—Subsection (b) of section 6343 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''9 months'' and inserting ''3 years''.

(b) PERIOD OF LIMITATION ON SUITS.—Subsection (c) of section 6532 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) by striking ''9 months'' and inserting ''3 years'', and

(2) in paragraph (2) by striking ''9-month'' and inserting ''3-year''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to—

(1) levies made after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(2) levies made on or before such date if the 9-month period has not expired under section 6343(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (without regard to this section) as of such date.

SEC. 10. WAIVER OF INSTALLMENT AGREEMENT FEE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6159 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (g) and by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection:

''(f) WAIVER OF INSTALLMENT AGREEMENT FEE.—The Secretary shall waive the fees imposed on installment agreements under this section for any taxpayer with an adjusted gross income that does not exceed 250 percent of the poverty level, as determined in accordance with criteria established by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and who has agreed to make payments under the installment agreement by electronic payment through a debit instrument.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 11. SUSPENSION OF RUNNING OF PERIOD FOR FILING PETITION OF SPOUSAL RELIEF AND COLLECTION CASES.

(a) PETITIONS FOR SPOUSAL RELIEF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (e) of section 6015 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) SUSPENSION OF RUNNING OF PERIOD FOR FILING PETITION IN TITLE 11 CASES.—In the case of a person who is prohibited by reason of a case under title 11, United States Code, from filing a petition under paragraph (1)(A) with respect to a final determination of relief under this section, the running of the period prescribed by such paragraph for filing such a petition with respect to such final determination shall be suspended for the period during which the person is so prohibited from filing such a petition, and for 60 days thereafter.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply to petitions filed under section 6015(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) COLLECTION PROCEEDINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d) of section 6330 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) by striking ''appeal such determination to the Tax Court'' in paragraph (1) and inserting ''petition the Tax Court for review of such determination'',

(B) by striking ''JUDICIAL REVIEW OF DETERMINATION'' in the heading of paragraph (1) and inserting ''PETITION FOR REVIEW BY TAX COURT'',

(C) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3), and

(D) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph:

''(2) SUSPENSION OF RUNNING OF PERIOD FOR FILING PETITION IN TITLE 11 CASES.—In the case of a person who is prohibited by reason of a case under title 11, United States Code, from filing a petition under paragraph (1) with respect to a determination under this section, the running of the period prescribed by such subsection for filing such a petition with respect to such determination shall be suspended for the period during which the person is so prohibited from filing such a petition, and for 30 days thereafter.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (c) of section 6320 of such Code is amended by striking ''(2)(B)'' and inserting ''(3)(B)''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to petitions filed under section 6330 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 12. VENUE FOR APPEAL OF SPOUSAL RELIEF AND COLLECTION CASES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) of section 7482(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by striking ''or'' at the end of subparagraph (E),

(2) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (F) and inserting a comma, and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following new subparagraphs:

''(G) in the case of a petition under section 6015(e), the legal residence of the petitioner, or

''(H) in the case of a petition under section 6320 or 6330—

''(i) the legal residence of the petitioner if the petitioner is an individual, and

''(ii) the principal place of business or principal office or agency if the petitioner is an entity other than an individual.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to petitions filed after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 13. INCREASE IN MONETARY PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURES OF INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (4) of section 7213(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 are each amended by striking ''$5,000'' and inserting ''$10,000''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to disclosures made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 14. DE NOVO TAX COURT REVIEW OF CLAIMS FOR EQUITABLE INNOCENT SPOUSE RELIEF.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (A) of section 6015(e)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new flush sentence:

''Any review of a determination by the Secretary with respect to a claim for equitable relief under subsection (f) shall be reviewed de novo by the Tax Court.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to petitions filed or pending before the Tax Court on and after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 15. BAN ON RAISING NEW ISSUES ON APPEAL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 77 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 7529. PROHIBITION ON INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RAISING NEW ISSUES IN AN INTERNAL APPEAL.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In reviewing an appeal of any determination initially made by the Internal Revenue Service, the Internal Revenue Service Office of Appeals may not consider or decide any issue that is not within the scope of the initial determination.

''(b) CERTAIN ISSUES DEEMED OUTSIDE OF SCOPE OF DETERMINATION.—For purposes of subsection (a), the following matters shall be considered to be not within the scope of a determination:

''(1) Any issue that was not raised in a notice of deficiency or an examiner's report which is the subject of the appeal.

''(2) Any deficiency in tax which was not included in the initial determination.

''(3) Any theory or justification for a tax deficiency which was not considered in the initial determination.

''(c) NO INFERENCE WITH RESPECT TO ISSUES RAISED BY TAXPAYERS.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to provide any limitation in addition to any limitations in effect on the date of the enactment of this section on the right of a taxpayer to raise an issue, theory, or justification on an appeal from a determination initially made by the Internal Revenue Service that was not within the scope of the initial determination.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 77 of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''Sec. 7529. Prohibition on Internal Revenue Service raising new issues in an internal appeal.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to matters filed or pending with the Internal Revenue Service Office of Appeals on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

UNITED STATES HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, April 11, 2013.

Hon. JOHN CORNYN,
Senate Minority Whip, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR CORNYN: The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC) would like to express its support and thank you for introducing the Small Business Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2013 (SBTBOR). As our organization advocates for legislation that helps Hispanic owned businesses grow the economy and create jobs, it is encouraging to see the SBTBOR introduced on the Senate floor during the 113th Congress.

As you are aware, Hispanic-owned firms are the fastest growing segment of American enterprise. We applaud you for recognizing this fact and, as a result, taking the initiative to provide sensible solutions for the USHCC constituency of Hispanic entrepreneurs. The four pillars of the SBTBOR—lowering compliance burden for taxpayers, strengthening taxpayer protections, compensating taxpayers for IRS abuses, and improving taxpayer access to the judicial system—are crucial for the financial health of small businesses across the country, and we hope that your Senate colleagues join in your efforts to pass common sense, pro-growth legislation.

In the USHCC's 2012–2014 Legislative Agenda, regulatory reform is noted as a critical part of the Hispanic small business community's potential for job creation and economic development. The SBTBOR, by addressing problematic regulation and interaction with the IRS, is in line with the USHCC's view for a full economic recovery. In order for the Hispanic community to continue leveraging its entrepreneurial spirit, we cannot allow for these job creators to be subject to slow and costly resolution of audits, low civil damages when the IRS disregards the law, fees on installment agreements for low-income taxpayers, and many other harsh burdens that exist for small businesses.

The SBTBOR could have an immediate, positive impact on the Hispanic business community and American economy as a whole. Please let us know how we may assist in your effort to promote an environment where entrepreneurs focus more on growing their businesses rather than dealing with unreasonable regulations. We are here to help.

Respectfully Submitted,

MARC RODRIGUEZ,
Chairman of the Board, USHCC.

JAVIER PALOMAREZ,
President & CEO, USHCC.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 726. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide health care practitioners in rural areas with training in preventive health care, including both physical and mental care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. SCHATZ. 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. 726

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 ''Rural Preventive Health Care Training Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE TRAINING.

Part D of title VII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 294 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 754 the following:

''SEC. 754A. PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE TRAINING.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make grants to, and enter into contracts with, eligible applicants to enable such applicants to provide preventive health care training, in accordance with subsection (c), to health care practitioners practicing in rural areas. Such training shall, to the extent practicable, include training in health care to prevent both physical and mental disorders before the initial occurrence of such disorders. In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall encourage, but may not require, the use of interdisciplinary training project applications.

''(b) LIMITATION.—To be eligible to receive training using assistance provided under subsection (a), a health care practitioner shall be determined by the eligible applicant involved to be practicing, or desiring to practice, in a rural area.

''(c) USE OF ASSISTANCE.—Amounts received under a grant made or contract entered into under this section shall be used—

''(1) to provide student stipends to individuals attending rural community colleges or other institutions that service predominantly rural communities, for the purpose of enabling the individuals to receive preventive health care training;

''(2) to increase staff support at rural community colleges or other institutions that service predominantly rural communities to facilitate the provision of preventive health care training;

''(3) to provide training in appropriate research and program evaluation skills in rural communities;

''(4) to create and implement innovative programs and curricula with a specific prevention component; and

''(5) for other purposes as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

''(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2017.''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 97—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE USE OF ABUSE-DETERRENT FORMULATIONS OF DRUGS

Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 97

Whereas when abuse-deterrent formulations of a drug have been developed, approved, and recognized as effective by the Food and Drug Administration, the approval and marketing of generic versions that do not have abuse-deterrent features are likely to prevent achievement of the public health purposes of the efforts to develop such abuse-deterrent formulations;

Whereas the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Food and Drug Administration have for many years strongly encouraged manufacturers of opioid drug products to develop abuse-deterrent formulations designed to prevent or discourage the abuse or misuse of those products;

Whereas in response, several opioid drug manufacturers have developed abuse-deterrent formulations;

Whereas efforts to reduce the level of abuse of opioid drug products are dependent on the widespread adoption of new technologies and approaches to the safer formulation of these drugs; and

Whereas the Commissioner of Food and Drugs has acknowledged that the Food and Drug Administration has the authority under current law to require generic versions of products that have been formulated or reformulated with abuse-deterrent features to have comparable features: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the Food and Drug Administration should exercise its acknowledged authority to—

(1) refuse to approve generic versions of non-abuse-deterrent opioid products that have been replaced in the market with abuse-deterrent formulations recognized by the Food and Drug Administration as effective; and

(2) require generic versions of abuse-deterrent opioid products to be formulated with comparable abuse-deterrent features.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet in open session on Thursday, April 18, 2013, at 10 a.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Hearing for Secretary of Labor-Designate Thomas E. Perez.''

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Anna Porto of the committee staff on (202) 224–5363.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet in open session on Tuesday, April 16, 2013, at 10 a.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Challenge of College Affordability: The Student Lens''

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Leanne Hotek of the committee staff on (202) 228–6685.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a hearing has been scheduled before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2013, at 10 a.m. in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The purpose of this hearing is to consider the President's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2014 for the Forest Service.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510–6150, or by email to John_Assini@energy.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact Meghan Conklin (202) 224–8046 or John Assini (202) 224–9313.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would like to advise you that a hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee on Water and Power of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2013, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

The purpose of this hearing will be to hear testimony on the following measures:

S. 211, the Provo River Project Transfer Act;

S. 284, the Fort Sumner Project Title Conveyance Act;

S. 510, the Scofield Land Transfer Act;

S. 659, to reauthorize the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991;

S. 684, to amend the Mni Wiconi Project Act of 1988 to facilitate completion of the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Supply System, and for other purposes;

S. 693, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the City of Hermiston, Oregon, water recycling and reuse project, and for other purposes.

S.J. Res. 12, A joint resolution to consent to certain amendments enacted by the legislature of the State of Hawaii to the Hawaiian Homes Commission, Act, 1920; and

H.R. 316 and S. Amdt. 579, the Collinsville Renewable Energy Promotion Act.

For further information, please contact Sara Tucker at (202) 224–6224 or John Assini at (202) 224-9313.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would like to advise you of an addition to a previously announced hearing before Subcommittee on Water and Power of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2013, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

In addition to the other measures previously announced, the Committee will also consider:

S. 684, to amend the Mni Wiconi Project Act of 1988 to facilitate completion of the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Supply System, and for other purposes;

S. 693, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the City of Hermiston, Oregon, water recycling and reuse project, and for other purposes; and

S. 715, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to use designated funding to pay for construction of authorized rural water projects, and for other purposes.

For further information, please contact Sara Tucker at (202) 224–6224, or John Assini at (202) 224–9313.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Lara Flint, a detailee on the Senate Judiciary Committee, be granted the privilege of the floor for the duration of calendar year 2013.

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

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 729, S. 730

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk. I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for the first time en bloc.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 729) to protect law-abiding citizens by preventing criminals from obtaining firearms.

A bill (S. 730) to prevent criminals from obtaining firearms through straw purchasing and trafficking.

Mr. BEGICH. I now ask for a second reading and object to my own request en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will receive their second reading on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2013

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, April 16, 2013; 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; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half; further, that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of S. 649, the gun safety legislation, and the time until the recess for the caucus meeting be for debate only; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:23 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, April 16, 2013, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

VERNON S. BRODERICK, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, VICE DEBORAH A. BATTS, RETIRED.

UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION

RACHEL ELISE BARKOW, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 31, 2017, VICE BERYL A. HOWELL, TERM EXPIRED.

CHARLES R. BREYER, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 31, 2015, VICE RUBEN CASTILLO, TERM EXPIRED.

WILLIAM H. PRYOR, JR., OF ALABAMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 31, 2017, VICE WILLIAM B. CARR, JR., TERM EXPIRED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADES INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be major general

BRIGADIER GENERAL LOUIS H. GUERNSEY, JR.
BRIGADIER GENERAL MATTHEW T. QUINN
BRIGADIER GENERAL KENNETH L. REINER

To be brigadier general

COLONEL STEPHEN G. KENT
COLONEL JUAN A. RIVERA

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be commander

MARIA V. NAVARRO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be captain

SHANE G. HARRIS

IN THE COAST GUARD

PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY OF SECTION 271(D), TITLE 14, U.S. CODE, THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE U.S. COAST GUARD:

To be rear admiral

BRUCE D. BAFFER
MARK E. BUTT
DAVID R. CALLAHAN
STEPHEN P. METRUCK
JOSEPH A. SERVIDIO

PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY OF SECTION 12203(A), TITLE 10, U.S. CODE, THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE U.S. COAST GUARD RESERVE:

To be rear admiral

KURT B. HINRICHS

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate April 15, 2013:

THE JUDICIARY

BEVERLY REID O'CONNELL, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

HON. JOHN K. DELANEY

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. DELANEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the New Life Christian School, an educational institution in my district celebrating its 25th Anniversary on April 22, 2013.

Since its founding in 1988, the New Life Christian School has served as an organization where our community's young adults can grow personally and academically. The school's students have acted as role models for their peers, and they should be proud of their academic accomplishments.

I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues help me in honoring the significant occasion of the New Life Christian School's 25th Anniversary. The school is a model organization and will remain an inspiration in our community for many generations to come.

A TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF THE HONORABLE WILLIAM H. ROYER

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a former member of the House of Representatives, Congressman William H. Royer, who served in the House from 1979 to 1981 after winning a special election to succeed the late Leo J. Ryan who was slain in Jonestown, Guyana.

Bill Royer was born in Jerome, Idaho, on April 11, 1920, and died on April 8, 2013, at the age of 92. At the time of his death he was the 15th oldest former member of the House. He was brought to Redwood City, California by his family as a young boy, and lived there his entire life. He was a graduate of Sequoia High School and Santa Clara University which he attended on a baseball scholarship, and he did graduate work at Oklahoma State University. He served his country in the U.S. Army Air Corps from 1943 to 1945 and enjoyed a successful career in real estate.

Bill Royer served on the Redwood City City Council from 1950 to 1966, and twice served as mayor. He was a member of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors from 1973 to 1979.

Bill Royer was predeceased by his beloved wife of 69 years, Shirley Royer, and leaves his sons Dennis and Peter, their wives and children, and many grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the entire House to join me in honoring our former colleague who served his community and his country with great devotion and distinction, and in expressing our most sincere sympathy to his sons and their families.

CONGRATULATIONS TO EDEN PRAIRIE BOYS SWIM TEAM STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. ERIK PAULSEN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Eden Prairie Boys Swim Team on their outstanding performance at this year's Minnesota State High School League Meet. The Eden Prairie Boys put on a dominating performance, winning their second state championship in as many years.

This Eden Prairie team has now gone two consecutive seasons undefeated, ending the year with a 7–0 record.

This dream season, as described by the team's coach, Kelly Boston, was capped off by winning performances by many of the team's members. Two relay teams and three individual swimmers captured state titles at the meet, and the Eden Prairie squad amassed 9 total top-three finishes while breaking state records in the 400 freestyle relay and the 200 medley relay.

All of these student athletes, their parents and their coaches deserve praise for their dedication and determination.

It's an honor to be able to represent, and recognize, such all-star athletes. Congratulations!

HONORING WASHINGTON STATE GOVERNOR BOOTH GARDNER

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and remember the life of Washington State Governor Booth Gardner. He brought thought and care to everything he did. While running for King County Sheriff, Governor Gardner and four other Washington State governors came together to an event to show their support for me. It touched me deeply that he would take the time to make that public gesture, and his words of encouragement still resonate with me today. Governor Gardner fought for what he believed in with passion and conviction, and was a champion of many of the causes close to my own heart, such as improving U.S. trade relations and the education of our children. With his death last month, Washington lost one of its fiercest advocates, but his legacy lives on.

HONORING ELZORA MAE BROWN

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague, Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, to honor the extraordinary life of Elzora Mae Brown, a fourth-generation, three-time cancer survivor and lifelong champion for breast cancer awareness and research among women of color. With her passing on March 3, 2013, we look to the outstanding quality of her life's work and the countless lives she touched and saved over the course of her career in advocacy.

Born March 20, 1949 in Holdenville, Oklahoma, Elzora Mae Brown received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Oklahoma State University before moving to the Washington, D.C. area, where she would live for the next 30 years. Ms. Brown received a wealth of experience in public communication through her role assisting the lobbying office of the Ford Motor Company. In 1976, she secured an administrative assistant's post at the White House, which led to a quick ascent in communications positions, including becoming assistant director for public affairs at the Federal Communications Commission and public affairs director with the Broadcast Capital Fund.

At the age of 32, Ms. Brown was diagnosed with breast cancer. As the youngest of eight children, she was prepared to face the same disease that had struck her great-grandmother, grandmother, mother, and three sisters. In most cases, swift action via mastectomy had saved her family members' lives. Only her late sister Belva Brissett lost a 12-year battle with breast cancer in 1990. As Ms. Brown took actions to save her life, she decided to use her experience as a sounding board for other women. She eventually underwent two mastectomies and multiple treatments throughout a courageous and continued battle with bouts of breast and ovarian cancer over the years. Yet, she was able to channel the power of these challenges into a trailblazing advocacy campaign.

In the 1980s, her minority and media-focused public relations position at the Broadcast Capital Fund allowed her to spearhead televised public service announcements about breast cancer that aimed to reach inner-city women. A short film about preventative care, ''Once a Year . . . For a Lifetime,'' which she helped to produce, featured celebrities such as Phylicia Rashad from ''The Cosby Show'' reading personal testimony from cancer patients—including the diaries of Belva Brissett.

Ms. Brown noted that few, if any, mammogram summits and information forums at the time were targeted to African American, minority, and underserved women. She began speaking to local churches, clinics, and civic groups about the benefits of self-examination and mammograms, while dispelling false notions of breast cancer as a white women's issue. By 1989, Ms. Brown had organized the Breast Cancer Resource Committee, BCRC, with the mission of reducing the disproportionate breast cancer mortality rates among African American women by 50 percent at the end of the century through education, prevention, and early detection. An offshoot of this initiative was named in honor of her late sister

and co-founder: the Belva Brissett Advocacy Center.

In 1991, Ms. Brown was appointed by President George H.W. Bush to the National Cancer Advisory Board. As the first African American woman to serve in this post, she was able to direct vital funding toward inner-city cancer screenings and invite hundreds of leaders from the nation's black community to participate in education forums. She served on the President's Special Commission on Breast Cancer from 1992 to 1994, organizing the Cancer Awareness Program Services, CAPS. And in 1993, Ms. Brown proudly helped organize the Washington D.C.-based breast cancer survivor support group for African American women, ''Rise, Sister Rise.'' Among countless local and national accolades, Ms. Brown also co-authored the 2003 book, ''100 Questions and Answers About Breast Cancer.''

Today, California's 13th Congressional District and the District of Columbia salute and honor an outstanding individual and a stalwart community leader, Ms. Elzora Mae Brown. Her invaluable service to our nation will be forever supported by the endless legacy of her work. We offer our sincerest condolences to her beloved family and to the many friends and associates whose lives she touched over the course of her incredible life. She will be deeply missed.

IN HONOR OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOROUGH OF LAUREL SPRINGS

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the One-hundredth Anniversary of the founding of the Borough of Laurel Springs.

On April 2, 1913, the people of Laurel Springs broke with Clementon Township to form their own community. In the past century, Laurel Springs has been a peaceful place to call home for many, and a relaxing destination for people from near and far. Its idyllic South Jersey location has been appreciated for centuries.

Poet Walt Whitman spent much of his time between 1876 and 1884 in a summer house in what later became the Borough of Laurel Springs. It was there that he wrote portions of his renowned collection Leaves of Grass. Of Laurel Lake, Whitman simply wrote that it was ''the prettiest lake in either America or Europe.'' Whitman's praise revealed this well-kept secret to the world, attracting residents and visitors and helping the community grow and thrive.

Mr. Speaker, this beautiful community has served as a home to generations of New Jerseyans and a home away from home for tourists from around the world. On the centennial of the creation of the borough, the citizens, mayor, and council of Laurel Springs should be congratulated for reaching this milestone. I join all of South Jersey in wishing the people of Laurel Springs another hundred years of happiness and prosperity for their community.

MARYLAND'S LEGISLATURE'S SUPPORT OF A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO OVERTURN THE SUPREME COURT CASE, CITIZENS UNITED V. FEC

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the following:

In January 2010, the Supreme Court issued a decision in Citizens United v. FEC that fundamentally overturned American campaign finance laws by treating corporations as ''persons'' under the First Amendment, thus enabling CEOs to make unlimited expenditures from corporate treasuries into political campaigns. An estimated $1 billion of outside money, an unprecedented amount, was spent in the 2012 election. Of this amount, an estimated $400 million was received from anonymous sources as it was channeled through entities that do not have to identify their donors. The impact of this secret special interest money will greatly diminish the integrity of our electoral process.

Many legislative solutions have been identified to correct this trend that damages our democracy. One alternative would reverse the decision of the Court through an amendment to the Constitution. Senator Jamie Raskin, from the State of Maryland, has made a significant contribution to the development of Federal legislation that would overturn the Citizens United case. Moreover, Senator Raskin has been a leader in the Maryland State Senate in amassing support from Maryland legislators to call upon the U.S. Congress to pass a Constitutional Amendment to correct this decision. I would like to commend Senator Raskin for his work to strengthen the integrity of our electoral process.

THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
Annapolis, MD, January, 2012.

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS: We, the Undersigned Members of the Maryland General Assembly, call upon you to pass a constitutional amendment to reverse the United States Supreme Court's 5–4 ruling in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010), which declared that corporations enjoy the First Amendment political rights of the people and toppled dozens of state and federal laws and many decades of judicial precedent preventing corporations (and unions) from spending corporate (and union) treasury funds in political campaigns.

This radical departure from judicial precedent and democratic values has already brought a torrent of corporate money, much of it secret, into American politics, fundamentally distorting public elections and campaigns for public office. The decision poses a direct and dramatic threat to government ''of the people, by the people and for the people.''

By bringing corporations into the heart of the political process, Citizens United changes the character of democracy. For-profit corporations (except benefit corporations) are legally hound to pursue the maximization of profits and economic advantage in all of their endeavors. This is one reason why most United States Supreme Court Justices, from Chief Justice john Marshall to Chief Justice William Rehnquist. to Justice Byron White to the four dissenting justices in Citizens United v. FEC, have rejected the claim that corporations have political rights.

Corporations enjoy special state-conferred economic and legal advantages not enjoyed by natural persons, including limited liability of the shareholders, perpetual life of the corporation itself, and favorable treatment of the accumulation and distribution of assets. These advantages permit corporations to amass vast sums of money that are spent properly for economic purposes but not for the purposes of intervening in democratic politics and entrenching corporate power.

Article V of the United States Constitution empowers the people, the states and the Congress to use the constitutional amending process to protect republican self-government.

This power has repeatedly been used by the people when the Supreme Court has undermined the progress or popular democracy.

As Members of the Maryland General Assembly, we sharply disagree with the majority decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission and call upon the United States Congress to propose and send to the states for ratification as soon as is practicable a constitutional amendment to reverse this decision and restore fair elections and democratic sovereignty to the states and to the people.

Very truly yours,

Del. Aisha Braveboy; Del. Alfred Carr; Del. Ana Sol Gutierrez; Del. Anne Healey; Del. Anne Kaiser; Del. Ariana Kelly; Del. Aruna Miller; Del. Barbara Frush; Del. Benjamin Kramer; Del. Bonnie Cullison; Del. Brian Feldman; Del. Brian McHale; Del. C.T. Wilson; Del. Cheryl Glenn; Del. Craig Zucker; Del. Curt Anderson; Del. Dan Morhaim; Del. Dana Stein; Del. Doyle Niemann; Del. Elizabeth Bobo.

Del. Emmett Burns; Del. Eric Leudtke; Del. Frank Turner; Del. Galen Clagett; Del. Geraldine Valentino-Smith; Del. Guy Guzzone; Del. Hattie Harrison; Del. Heather Mizeur; Del. James Gilchrist; Del. James Hubbard; Del. James Malone; Del. James Proctor; Del. Jay Walker; Del. Jill Carter; Del. Jon Cardin; Del. John Olszewski; Del. John Wood; Del. Jolene Ivey; Del. Joseline Pena-Melnyk; Del. Joseph Minnick.

Del. Joseph Vallario; Del. Justin Ross; Del. Kathleen Dumais; Del. Keiffer Mitchell; Del. Keith Haynes; Del. Kiril1 Reznick; Del. Kris Valderama; Del. Kumar Barve; Del. Luke Clippinger; Del. Maggie McIntosh; Del. Marvin Holmes; Del. Mary Washington; Del. Melvin Stukes; Del. Michael Summers; Del. Michael Weir; Del. Norman Conway; Del. Pamela Beidle; Del. Peter Hammen; Del. Peter Murphy; Del. Rudolph Cane.

Del. Sam Arora; Del. Sandy Rosenberg; Del. Shane Pendergrass; Del. Shane Robinson; Del. Shaw Tarrant; Del. Sheila Hixson; Del. Shirley Nathan-Pulliam; Del. Stephen Lafferty; Del. Steven DeBoy; Del. Susan Lee; Del. Talmedge Branch; Del. Tawanna Gaines; Del. Theodore Sophocleus; Del. Tom Hucker; Del. Veronica Turner; Sen. Bill Ferguson; Sen. Brian Frosh; Sen. Catherine Pugh; Sen. Delores Kelley; Sen. Edward Kasemeyer.

Sen. James Brochin; Sen. James Robey; Sen. James Rosapepe; Sen. Jamie Raskin; Sen. Jennie Forehand; Sen. Joan Carter-Conway; Sen. Joanne Benson; Sen. John Astle; Sen. Karen Montgomery; Sen. Katherine Klausmeier; Sen. Lisa Gladden; Sen. Nancy King; Sen. Nathaniel McFadden; Sen. Norman Stone; Sen. Paul Pinsky; Sen. Richard Madaleno; Sen. Robert Garagiola; Sen. Robert Zirkin; Sen. Roger Manno; Sen. Ronald Young; Sen. Thomas Middleton; Sen. Ulysses Currie; Sen. Verna Jones Rodwell; Sen. Victor Ramirez.

RECOGNIZING DR. KUMAR MAHADEVAN

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize my constituent, Dr. Kumar Mahadevan, for his many contributions to marine science.

Dr. Mahadevan is retiring in May from his position as chief executive and president of Mote Marine Laboratory, which is a private research center and aquarium based in Sarasota, Florida.

Dr. Mahadevan joined Mote Marine in 1978 as a senior scientist and became chief executive and president in 1986.

Under his leadership, Mote has grown from a small research facility to an internationally recognized laboratory of marine science and a local treasure teaching children and adults about sea life and conservation.

During his tenure, Mote has added an aquarium that attracts more than 350,000 annually and expanded to include a 200-acre Aquaculture Park in eastern Sarasota County, research field stations on Pine Island in Charlotte Harbor and Summerland Key in the Florida Keys, satellite offices in Punta Gorda and Boca Grande and a second public outreach exhibit dedicated to coral reefs in the Eco-Discovery Center in Key West.

The nonprofit's annual operating budget has increased from approximately $2 million in 1978 to more than $17 million and its staff has grown from 52 members to 192 members, including 31 doctorate-level scientists who are leaders in their fields.

I was proud to serve on the board at Mote prior to my election to Congress. I have seen firsthand the positive impact that Dr. Mahadevan has had on public policy to revitalize and sustain marine resources through science based outreach and education.

Although he is stepping down from his current position, I am pleased that Dr. Mahadevan will stay on as president emeritus, which will allow him to continue to promote the lab's research and development.

In the meantime, I appreciate this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for his outstanding contributions to Mote Marine Laboratory and the field of marine science.

CONGRATULATIONS TO HOPKINS GIRLS BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. ERIK PAULSEN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Hopkins Girls Basketball Team.

On March 16, 2013 the Hopkins Girls Team won the Minnesota State High School Basketball tournament for the third consecutive year, making them the first Class 4A School to win three consecutive championships since the tournament expanded to four classes.

Head Coach Brian Cosgriff has undoubtedly accomplished something great with this program. During Cosgriff's era, Hopkins has had only four seasons with seven or more losses. This year, Hopkins completed the season winning 28 games and losing just one.

The path to achieving greatness is never uncontested, as the girls found out. But despite the one loss, this team took the state tournament with more than a ten point win over each opponent they faced.

All of these student athletes, their parents and their coaches deserve praise for their dedication and determination.

It's an honor to be able to represent, and recognize, such all-star athletes. Congratulations!

CONGRATULATING HOPWOOD JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, just over 50 years ago, in the fall of 1962, the first school to offer secondary education in the Northern Mariana Islands was renamed Hopwood Junior Senior High School, in honor of Admiral Herbert Gladstone Hopwood, a Naval officer with 42 years of distinguished service to our country, including 3 years as Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet.

The school had been founded following the end of World War II, as our community turned from the harrowing years of desperate survival to the work of rebuilding our islands and improving the lives of those who lived there. The American administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands directed that uniform public education be implemented throughout Micronesia; and in September 1949 secondary education was introduced in the Northern Mariana Islands with the establishment of Saipan Intermediate School, offering classes for grades seven through nine.

At first, the small school shared a campus with Chalan Kanoa Elementary School, but Saipan Intermediate moved to its own campus in the village of Chalan Piao in 1952, where classes were held in reconditioned wartime Quonset huts. The original curriculum included arithmetic, English, native languages, science, history, geography, domestic arts, crafts, vocational training, and music. Teacher training courses were also established.

During these early years in the reconstruction of the Northern Mariana Islands educational options beyond ninth grade were limited. There were few private high schools and, prior to 1962, no public high schools. But the desire for formal educational advancement had already established a foothold in our society.

In the late 1950's, Saipan Intermediate School was renamed Hopwood Intermediate School. And then in 1962, it was renamed Hopwood Junior Senior High School to recognize the enrollment of tenth grade students. This first class of public high school students in the Northern Mariana Islands then graduated from Hopwood in 1965.

But Hopwood's time as a senior high school was short. In 1969 a new and larger public high school opened on Saipan; and Hopwood assumed its current name of Hopwood Junior High School.

In the years since, the school has greatly expanded. The campus now includes vocational education buildings; an alternative school, Lina'la Malawasch Academy; and a performing arts building. Hopwood now has the second largest student body of any Saipan school, serving nearly 1,200 young scholars.

Along with improvements in the physical facility, so too have academic opportunities, student achievement and faculty development evolved. One significant milestone reflective of this ongoing advancement was reached in 1993, when the school was granted preliminary accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. It continues today as a fully accredited member of WASC.

Hopwood's motto is "We Make Everyday the Best." This upbeat attitude is reflected in the faces and in the actions of the school's students, teachers, and staff alike. This drive to be the best is also reflected in the wide range of co-curricular and sports activities in which students participate and represent their school so well. By way of example, in recent years Hopwood Junior High students have won awards in the National Junior Forensic League regional competition, regional spelling bees, Academic Challenge Bowls, regional thespian competitions, and local essay and logo contests. This diversity extend to the athletic fields, as well, where Hopwood students have won numerous track and field, cross country, soccer, volleyball, and basketball competitions.

From its humble beginnings in 1949 and to this day, Hopwood is recognized as an institution that has played a historic role in our community and that continues to serve a vital role in the lives of our students and our community. I have great confidence that the school will continue to distinguish itself in the years to come. And I offer my congratulations to all those who have been affiliated with Hopwood Junior High School over these many years—teachers, staff, students, alumni, and parents.

RECOGNITION OF RYAN DAHMER

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievement of my constituent, Ryan Dahmer, a young man from Franklin, West Virginia, who recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Ryan's accomplishment is the result of years of hard work and service, which has undoubtedly benefitted his neighbors and the community in which he lives.

Ryan Dahmer began serving his community as a young boy by joining the Cubs Scouts, eventually earning the Arrow of Light, the organization's honor society and Eagle Scout equivalent. Since becoming a Boy Scout, Ryan's community involvement has only increased. Last year, he participated in the 2012 Youth and Government Seminar and met State Senator Clark Barnes and Delegate Allen Evans, his local representatives in the state legislature.

In December 2012, Ryan completed the requirements to become an Eagle Scout and will be officially recognized during an Eagle Court of Honor on April 21, 2013. In order to become an Eagle Scout, Ryan completed a community service project focused on safety and

beautification at the Franklin Town Park. The project included painting buildings, picnic tables and trash cans, laying mulch, repairing playground equipment, and conducting a safety survey.

Ryan Dahmer lives with his family in Pendleton County, West Virginia. After high school, Ryan plans to attend Fairmont State University and pursue a degree in aviation.

Mr. Speaker, the Boy Scout Oath encourages young scouts do their best for God and country. Indeed, Ryan Dahmer has done his duty, by serving his community and making Franklin, West Virginia a better place.

HONORING ITNAMERICA FOR DELIVERING A HALF-MILLION SENIOR RIDES

HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate an organization based in my district on reaching an important milestone. With its beginnings in Portland, Maine, the senior transportation service ITNAmerica provided its half-millionth ride in March 2013.

Designed to recreate the comfort, convenience, and independence of private automobile ownership, ITNAmerica offers rides to seniors who can no longer drive their own vehicles. Using a network of paid and volunteer drivers, the organization offers ''arm-through-arm and door-through-door service'' seven days a week, 24 hours a day. With an average age of 85, riders use the service for anything from shopping trips to doctor's appointments.

Reading the stories of its riders, it's clear that ITNAmerica's service is not just about getting seniors from Point A to B.

Without the ability to drive, seniors can find themselves suddenly shut off from services, friends, and the world—with terrible repercussions for their health and wellbeing. Just as sadly, our communities can also lose out on the many things they have to offer. This service allows seniors to keep their freedom and quality of life while maintaining their connections to businesses, churches, and volunteer commitments. And along the way, they develop lasting friendships with their drivers and fellow riders.

Executive Director Katherine Freund founded the organization in 1995 after her 3-year-old son was injured by an elderly driver. Katherine decided the accident was less the fault of the driver than of a system that does not adequately meet the transportation needs of seniors who live past their driving years. From humble beginnings, ITNAmerica has grown to 23 affiliates in 18 states across the country and Katherine has earned numerous awards and accolades for the difference she has made in the lives of seniors.

While it took 18 years to reach the first half-million rides, ITNAmerica expects to deliver its millionth ride in only three years from now. With millions of baby boomers soon retiring, this service is more important than ever. My sincere congratulations and appreciation go to Katherine Freund, ITNAmerica, its affiliates, staff, volunteers, and, indeed, riders on reaching this incredible milestone.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 3, 2009, the day I took office, the national debt was $10,627,961,295,930.67.

Today, it is $16,819,547,647,482.89. We've added $6,191,586,351,552.22 to our debt in 4 years. This is $6.1 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a Balanced Budget Amendment. We must stop this unconscionable accumulation of debt.

CONGRATULATIONS TO EDINA BOYS HOCKEY STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. ERIK PAULSEN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Edina Boys Hockey Team on their impressive performance at the State Hockey Tournament victory on March 9, 2013.

The team defeated Hill Murray High School in the finals to win their 11th State Tournament title and end their season with a 22–6 winning record. This game served as the programs' rubber match, with Edina winning the championship in 1988 and Hill Murray evening the series in 2008. This year, Edina came out the victor once again.

The Edina Boys hockey program carries on a proud tradition of success in athletics at Edina High School under the coaching staff of Curt Giles.

All of these student athletes, their parents and their coaches deserve praise for their dedication and determination.

It is an honor to be able to represent, and recognize, such all-star athletes. Congratulations!

CONGRATULATIONS KITTITAS VALLEY HEALTHCARE (KVH) HOSPITAL

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to applaud the Kittitas Valley Healthcare (KVH) Hospital for being named among the top 100 critical access hospitals in the nation. Having immediate, quality care can make the difference between saving a life and losing it, and I am so proud that a facility like KVH is serving the constituents of Washington's 8th District. Critical access hospitals are institutions that are at least 35 miles away from another hospital and have a maximum of 27 acute care beds. All 100 of these institutions are to be commended for their work ensuring access to quality healthcare for all citizens, and especially those living in rural areas. KVH was chosen to be in the top 100 because it provides exceptional quality of care, patient outcomes post-hospitalization, patient satisfaction, and affordability.

This is only the second time such a list has been released and KVH Hospital has been on the list both times. KVH is one of only two hospitals in Washington State to receive this distinction and has repeatedly shown itself to be a champion for the well-being of their patients. It is truly committed to improving the communities it serves. Again, I applaud KVH for its dedication to providing communities with superior patient care and achieving this high honor. I encourage it to continue its practices shown to improve patient health outcomes and satisfaction, and I hope that other critical access hospitals from Washington State and across the nation will strive to copy KVH's success.

RECOGNIZING THE RECIPIENTS OF THE DALE CITY MULTICULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 2013 recipients of the Dale City Multicultural Achievement Awards sponsored by the Dale City Christian Church. The Dale City Multicultural Achievement Awards began in 1984 to educate youth about the achievements of African–Americans under the adopted motto, ''For if a man does not know his history, he cannot know his future.''

Currently in its 29th year, the Dale City Multicultural Achievement Awards banquet is an annual event honoring individuals who show an exceptional devotion to their community through service. The purpose of the event is two–fold: To highlight the extraordinary work of individuals who are improving the lives of people within the local community and to offer scholarship assistance to high school seniors pursuing higher education. The banquet promotes higher education and independence by providing guidance and financial assistance to students, which helps instill the honorees with national, community, and family pride.

The 2013 recipients are graduating high school seniors, public servants, business leaders, local church leaders, and members of the Dale City Christian Church congregation. It is my honor to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the names of the recipients of the 2013 Dale City Multicultural Achievement Awards:

Pastoral Leadership Award: Dr. Derek Grier.

Religious Leadership Award: Rev. Morris Bussie.

Educational Leadership Award: Ms. Anita Flemons, Mr. Terrence Davenport.

Professional Leadership Award: Dr. Kiana Rene Trent.

Community Service Award: Dale City Sports Club, Cecil and Veronica Anderson.

Business Achievement Award: Ms. Michelle McKinney.

Christian Service Award: Ms. Marguerette Swift, Mr. Thomas Martin.

Faithfulness Award: Deaconess Edna Fulcher, Trustee George Boggs.

Dedicated Christian Family Award: Deacon Bedford, Deaconess Karen King and Family.

Senior Leadership Award: Miss Tyra Bland.

Senior Christian Service Award: Miss Dene Middleton, Master Latrell Riley.

Junior Leadership Award: Master Kyle Stokes.

Junior Christian Service Award: Miss Faith Leftridge, Master Samuel Thomas.

2013 High School Senior Scholarship Recipients: Miss Tyra Bland, Miss Marquetta Inabinet, Miss Dene Middleton, Master Latrell Riley.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending the 2013 Dale City Multicultural Achievement Awards recipients for their dedication to building and maintaining a thriving community. Each recipient has made an impact on Dale City and with these awards we hope to show them how much their contributions are appreciated.

RECOGNIZING THE BURKE VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT 65TH ANNUAL INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS BANQUET

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department, which is hosting its 65th Annual Installation of Officers Banquet, to thank its volunteers for filling an essential role in keeping the community safe.

The Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department was founded in January 1948, and for 65 years has provided lifesaving, fire suppression/prevention and emergency medical/rescue services to the residents of Burke, Fairfax County, and the surrounding communities. It also provides, houses, and maintains firefighting and emergency medical equipment; provides opportunities for professional growth and development for the membership; and maintains and fosters a strong viable organization.

As one of the most active volunteer fire and rescue departments in Fairfax County, the Burke Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department works in cooperation with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department to serve the community. Last year alone, the Burke station handled 3,384 incidents and 4,881 unit responses.

For 2013, the following dedicated men and women deserve special recognition for stepping up to become officers and members of the board of directors:

Chief: Thomas Warnock.

Assistant Chief: Lawrence Bocknek.

Deputy Chiefs: Tina Godfrey and John Hudak.

Captain; Melissa Ashby.

Lieutenant: Keith O'Connor.

Sergeants: John Rose and Jennifer Babic.

President: Patrick Owens.

Vice President: John Powers.

Secretary: Larry Barnett.

Treasurer: Sheryl Gilhooly.

Board Members: L. Joseph Dumas, Crystal Eden, and Alisha Sunde.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the department for 65 years of service and in thanking all of the brave volunteers who do not hesitate to drop everything when the community calls in need of help. To all of these men and women who put themselves in harm's way to protect our residents I say: "Stay safe."

CELEBRATION OF ALFRED T. LILLY, FLORENCE, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the 200th birthday of Alfred T. Lilly, founder of the Lilly Library in Florence, Massachusetts.

Mr. Lilly was a cornerstone of the Florence community: He began as a superintendant of the Nonotuck Silk Company, eventually becoming part owner of the company after Nonotuck became one of the largest and best-known manufacturers of silk in the United States. Mr. Lilly helped found a number of businesses in Florence, including the present-day Florence Savings Bank. He believed that local businesses were an integral part of any vibrant community.

Mr. Speaker, in 1888, Mr. Lilly recognized the need for a library in his community. By deeding the land where the building was to be constructed, donating a considerable portion of his personal library, and providing financial support, Mr. Lilly led the efforts to construct the library that now bears his name. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lilly was a philanthropist in the purest sense of the word and cared deeply about his community. His dedication, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why, two centuries after his birth, Alfred Lilly's spirit thrives in the institution that he helped to form.

It is in recognition of his dedication and passion, Mr. Speaker, that I ask my fellow Members of the United States House of Representatives to join me in honoring the great contributions Mr. Lilly made to the community of Florence.

RECOGNIZING THE 2013 ASIAN–AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE 2013 AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Asian-American Chamber of Commerce and the recipients of the 2013 Asian–American Chamber Awards.

The Asian-American Chamber of Commerce, AACC, is dedicated to improving economic development for Asian Pacific American Owned businesses in the Washington, DC region. The 11th District of Virginias is blessed by its diversity. Roughly 1 in 4 residents are foreign born and approximately 40 percent are minorities. Half of our foreign-born population emigrated from Asia and more than 80,000 of our neighbors speak an Asian language at home. Northern Virginia has a robust international business community and is home to the largest concentration of minority-owned technology firms in the nation. The AACC and its members contribute greatly to our economic strength and stability; Asian-American businesses generate more than 52 percent of total revenues generated by all minority owned businesses in this region.

Each year, the AACC recognizes businesses and non-profits in the Asian-American community for their outstanding contributions to the Metropolitan Washington community and economy. I congratulate the following individuals and businesses for receiving one of the 2013 Asian-American Chamber of Commerce Awards:

Asian Business Excellence Award:
Pragmatics, Inc.

Small Business of the Year:
APS Pest Services.

Asian Business Leader of the Year:
S. Tien Wong (Lore Systems, Inc.).

Outstanding Corporate Partner Award:
Wells Fargo.

Non-Profit of the Year:
Becky's Fund; Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, Fairfax Region.

Volunteer of the Year:
Le Ha Anderson, Andrew Bittan.

Government Agency of the Year:
Fairfax County Economic Development Agency.

Emerging Business of the Year:
The W Salon.

Next Generation Investment Award:
Erie Insurance.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the honorees of the 2013 Asian-American Chamber of Commerce Awards and in commending the Asian American Chamber of Commerce for its work to support Asian- and Pacific Islander-owned businesses throughout our region.

RECOGNIZING MS. JEAN PACKARD ON HER 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my dear friend and mentor Jean Packard on her 90th birthday.

Jean, who moved to Fairfax County in 1951, got her start in public life the same way I did—as president of her neighborhood civic association. She likes to say that her first "win" was convincing the county to pick up trash—a humble start to what would become five decades of community leadership, particularly on the environmental. Jean was unabashed environmentalist long before most people knew the meaning of that word.

Jean's activities soon branched out beyond her neighborhood, and she was elected president of the Fairfax Federation of Citizens Associations. She was elected Chairman of the Fairfax Board of Supervisors, serving from 1972 to 1976. During that time, she also served as chairman of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. She later became the first woman in Virginia elected to serve on a regional soil and water conservation district board, a post in which she still serves today. She has held numerous other positions including: the state Soil and Water Conservation Board, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, the Fairfax Land Preservation Trust, and the Sierra Club's national board.

For her extraordinary service to the citizens of Fairfax County, Jean has received many

well–deserved awards and honors including Fairfax County Citizen of the Year, Fairfax County Conservationist of the Year, and the Architecture Medal for Virginia Service from the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects.

In 2010, I was honored to present Jean with the Fairfax County Park Authority's Sally Ormsby Environmental Stewardship Award, which is named in memory of our dear friend and fellow community leader. In further recognition of Jean's contributions to environmental causes, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust's lifetime achievement award was renamed the Jean R. Packard Award in her honor in 2011.

It is no exaggeration to say that without Jean's dedication and passion for our community and the environment, Virginia would have more erosion, dirtier water, and fewer trees. Fairfax County in particular would not be the green, nationally-recognized environmental steward it is today.

Mr. Speaker, I asked my colleagues to join me in congratulating Jean Packard on her 90th birthday and thanking her for her decades of service to our community and future generations through her environmental stewardship and example of civic engagement.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL CHURCHILL MUSEUM IN FULTON, MO

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Churchill Museum in Fulton, MO for its recent award from the Missouri Humanities Council honoring its ''The Kingdom at Work'' exhibit. As part of the ''The Way We Worked'' program instituted by the Missouri Humanities Council, this effort provided an excellent opportunity to display the cultural history of the area and also demonstrated the power of collaboration in our local community.

''The Kingdom at Work'' exhibit focused on sharing the stories of how work became a central element of American culture and the many challenges and innovations affecting the workforce and work environment. Concentrating on several broad categories, the exhibit shared the unique stories of work from different walks of life in Callaway County over the past century.

In addition to the National Churchill Museum, I would like to extend special recognition to the local groups and organizations that cooperated to make the exhibit possible, including: the City of Fulton, the Callaway County Chamber of Commerce, the Kingdom of Callaway Historical Society, the Fulton Area Development Corporation, Westminster College and student organization, the University of Missouri Extension Program—Labor Education Program, Sunrise Sign Company and local trade unions.

The final exhibit is an outstanding example of how one community's commitment to collaboration and learning can bring the humanities to life and make our cultural history accessible to current generations. The exhibit and activities surrounding its debut not only highlighted the past but also gave Callaway County the opportunity to explore the future.

In closing, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring the National Churchill Museum's ''The Kingdom at Work'' exhibit and its contribution to the humanities.

IN RECOGNITION OF WALTER ALCORN FOR RECEIPT OF LEADERSHIP FAIRFAX'S KATHERINE K. HANLEY PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD FOR 2013

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize this year's recipient of Leadership Fairfax's Katherine K. Hanley Public Service Award. This year's award goes to Walter Alcorn, whom I had the great pleasure of working with during his sixteen years on the Fairfax County Planning Commission.

Leadership Fairfax is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to finding, training and growing leaders in Northern Virginia. Leadership Fairfax seeks to build leaders who raise the tide not only in their organization or local community but in the whole Northern Virginia region. Graduates from its programs become part of and stay connected to a fast growing number of civic leaders. I've always said, ''When you walk into a crowded room it's easy to spot the graduates of Leadership Fairfax—they just stand out!''

Northern Virginia is blessed with many leaders who have given their time and service to make a difference in our community. To recognize these outstanding leaders among us, Leadership Fairfax instituted the Katherine K. Hanley Public Service Award. This annual award honors an individual for his or her outstanding accomplishments in the areas of public service employment or service on a public board, authority or commission and for lasting contributions to the quality of life in the community.

Walter Alcorn has stood out in our community for many years. After graduating from the University of Virginia, he began his career as a policy aide to then–Supervisor Kate Hanley, who was my predecessor as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Kate appointed him to the Fairfax County Planning Commission in 1996, and I had the honor of reappointing him three times during my tenure as Chairman. As Chair of the Planning Commission's Tysons Corner Committee, Walter oversaw revisions of the comprehensive plan for Tysons that will allow what is known as the downtown of Fairfax County to be transformed from an area filled mainly with strip malls, car dealerships, and office buildings into a vibrant, walkable, sustainable, mixed–use community. Many people said that was impossible, but Walter displayed the patience and persistence of an owl in finding a way to lead a wide variety of stakeholders to forge the compromises necessary to move forward. The result of that effort, the Tysons Plan, received the 2011 Daniel Burnham Award from the American Planning Association. That prestigious award recognizes only one urban plan in the nation each year, for advancing the science and art of planning, and Walter deserves much of the credit.

Along with his service to the county, Walter has been an enthusiastic little league baseball coach and serves on the steering committee of his Sunday School class at the United Christian Parish in Reston. When not volunteering, he is Vice President of Environmental Affairs and Industry Sustainability at the Consumer Electronics Association, where he leads environmental policy and electronics recycling efforts as well as legislative initiatives impacting electronic product design, eco–labeling and hazardous materials restrictions. Prior to CEA he was a consultant on electronics recycling issues and co–founded the National Center for Electronics Recycling in 2005. From 1992 to 2003 he worked at SAIC, where he left as Deputy Division Manager in the Technology Research Group. He resides in Reston with his wife, Kristina, and their two children, Ryan and Delia. He also enjoys a large circle of friends, of which I am proud to be a member.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Walter Alcorn for receiving of the Katherine K. Hanley Public Service Award and in thanking Leadership Fairfax for continuing to develop leaders for Northern Virginia.

RECOGNIZING THE FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT RECIPIENTS OF THE 2013 FAIRFAX COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VALOR AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding group of men and women in Northern Virginia. These individuals have demonstrated superior dedication to public safety and have been awarded the prestigious Valor Award by the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce.

The Valor Awards recognize remarkable heroism and bravery in the line of duty exemplified by our public safety agencies and their commitment to the community. Our public safety and law enforcement personnel put their lives on the line every day to keep our families and neighborhoods safe. This year's ceremony will recognize 36 individuals in a variety of categories including: the Lifesaving Award, the Certificate of Valor, the Bronze Medal of Valor, and the Silver Medal of Valor.

Twenty–six members of the Fairfax County Police Department are being honored for their exceptional service. It is with great pride that I submit the names of the following Valor Award Recipients:

2013 Silver Medal of Valor Recipients: Second Lieutenant Erik H. Roads, Officer First Class Eric W. Crago, and Police Officer First Class Thomas R. Divers.

2013 Bronze Medal of Valor Recipients: Police Officer First Class Luis A. Castellon, Police Officer First Class Matthew W. Stanfield, and Officer Kenneth I. Hunt, III.

2013 Certificate of Valor Recipients: Police Officer First Class Sean P. Corcoran, Police Officer First Class John R. Diffley, Police Officer First Class Peter E. Focazio, Police Officer First Class Michael R. Row, Police Officer First Class Anthony P. Stancampiano, and Officer Bradley E. Chiz.

2013 Lifesaving Award Recipients: Officer Kristen M. Bennett, Police Officer First Class Kenneth M. Bridgeman, Police Officer First Class Alan C. Cordray, Police Officer First Class Timothy S. Evans, Police Officer First Class Dana V. Ferreira, Police Officer First Class Brooks R. Gillingham (2 Lifesaving Awards), Police Officer First Class Christopher B. Hutchison, Police Officer First Class Richard A. Juchnewicz, Police Officer First Class Christopher W. Munson, Police Officer First Class Brendan T. Murphy, Police Officer First Class Ali Sepehri (2 Lifesaving Awards), Police Officer First Class Robert E. Welch, Master Police Officer Maureen M. McKeon, and Detective Annie R. Mack–Evans (Retired)

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the 2013 Valor Award Recipients, and thank each of the men and women who serve in the Fairfax County Police Department. Their efforts, made on behalf of the citizens of Fairfax County, are selfless acts of heroism and truly merit our highest praise. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

TRIBUTE TO HONOR FLIGHT OF OREGON

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 21 World War II veterans from Oregon who will be visiting their memorial this Friday in Washington, D.C. through Honor Flight of Oregon. On behalf of a grateful state and country, we welcome these heroes to the nation's capital.

The veterans on this flight from Oregon are as follows: James Chase, U.S. Army; Irene L. Christopherson, U.S. Army; Duane F. Goodman, U.S. Army; Charles V. Heaney, U.S. Army; John J. Kime, U.S. Army; Robert O. Phariss, U.S. Army/U.S. Air Force; Donald M. Rickard, U.S. Army; Donald S. Shilling, U.S. Army; Velma L. Sundet, U.S. Army; Ross A. Turkle, U.S. Army; Warren C. Gilfillan, U.S. Army Air Forces; Floyd E. Goldbloom, U.S. Army Air Forces; Elliot Lovelace, U.S. Army Air Forces; Leslie L. Lawrence, U.S. Coast Guard; Raymond H. Prescott, U.S. Marine Corps; Arthur Nelson Cauble, U.S. Merchant Marines; Arthur H. Cusson, U.S. Navy; Earl Garrett, U.S. Navy; Richard E. Mould, U.S. Navy; Charles A. Potter, U.S. Navy; Wayne W. Stram, U.S. Navy.

These 21 heroes join more than 98,000 veterans from across the country who, since 2005, have journeyed from their home states to Washington, D.C. to reflect at the memorials built in honor of our nation's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, each of us is humbled by the courage of these soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who put themselves in harm's way for our country and way of life. As a nation, we can never fully repay the debt of gratitude owed to them for their honor, commitment, and sacrifice in defense of the freedoms we have today.

My colleagues, please join me in thanking these veterans and the volunteers of Honor Flight of Oregon for their exemplary dedication and service to this great country. I especially want to recognize and thank Gail Yakopatz for her tireless work as president of Honor Flight of Oregon.

RECOGNIZING THE FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT RECIPIENTS OF THE 2013 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VALOR AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding group of men and women in Northern Virginia. These individuals have demonstrated superior dedication to public safety and have been awarded the prestigious Valor Award by the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce.

The Valor Awards recognize remarkable heroism and bravery in the line of duty exemplified by our public safety agencies and their commitment to the community. Our public safety and law enforcement personnel put their lives on the line every day to keep our families and neighborhoods safe. This year's ceremony will recognize 36 individuals in a variety of categories including: the Lifesaving Award, the Certificate of Valor, and the Bronze or Silver Medal of Valor.

Five members of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department are being honored this year for their exceptional service. It is with great pride that I submit the names of the following award recipients:

2013 Bronze Medal of Valor Recipients: Captain II Jerome Williams, Technician Rudy Iturrino, and Volunteer EMT Brandy L. Walker.

2013 Certificate of Valor Recipients: Captain I Timothy O. Barb and Captain I William S. Moreland.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the 2013 Valor Award Recipients, and thank each of the men and women who serve in the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department. Their efforts, made on behalf of the citizens of Fairfax County, are selfless acts of heroism and truly merit our highest praise. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

HONORING THE WORK OF LEGACIES OF WAR

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the work of Legacies of War, a project that continues to raise public awareness about the unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the country of Laos dropped by the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War.

Between 1964 and 1973, the U.S. Air Force dropped more than two million tons of bombs on Laos; about a third of those bombs failed to detonate. Today, those bombs remain lethal and embedded the ground, where they continue to maim, injure and kill civilians. Each year, hundreds of civilians, children, women and farmers get injured, maimed or killed by UXO. I witnessed many first-hand accounts of tragic stories from UXO survivors in December 2006 when I visited the Xiengkhoung Province in Laos, an area that was heavily contaminated by UXO. While progress has been made in recent years, we must continue clearance efforts until UXO are no longer a threat.

Legacies of War is a compelling and powerful educational program that provides needed attention to the suffering of the thousands of UXO victims in Laos. This month, Legacies of War is bringing two demining advocates from Laos to share their stories about the senseless deaths, injuries and tragic consequences caused by UXO. I commend Legacies of War for sponsoring this nationwide speaker tour series in cities across the U.S. to rally public support for increased urgency in the removal of UXO in Laos. This tour also provides an opportunity to promote healing and hope by creating a brighter and safer future for the people of Laos.

I strongly urge my colleagues to attend any events in their district and support UXO clearance programs in Laos and around the world. Children should not live in fear of the lethal remnants from a long-past war.

RECOGNIZING THE FAIRFAX COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2013 FAIRFAX COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VALOR AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding group of men and women in Northern Virginia. These individuals have demonstrated superior dedication to public safety and have been awarded the prestigious Valor Award by the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce.

The Valor Awards recognize remarkable heroism and bravery in the line of duty exemplified by our public safety agencies and their commitment to the community. Our public safety and law enforcement personnel put their lives on the line every day to keep our families and neighborhoods safe. This year's ceremony will recognize 36 individuals in a variety of categories including: the Lifesaving Award, the Certificate of Valor, and the Bronze or Silver Medal of Valor.

Five members of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office are being honored this year for their exceptional service. It is with great pride that I submit the names of the following award recipients:

2013 Silver Medal of Valor Recipient: Master Deputy Sheriff Curtis A. LeMay

2013 Life Saving Award Recipients: Correctional Technician Mark J. Richey, Private First Class Brandon A. Pitts, Private First Class Morgan R. Walker, and Master Deputy Sheriff Dwight D. Greear.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the 2013 Valor Award Recipients, and thank each of the men and women who serve in the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office. Their efforts, made on behalf of the citizens of Fairfax County, are selfless acts of heroism and truly merit our highest praise. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

THREE CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR VANDALIA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, there is a school in the Sixth District of North Carolina that just won its third state championship this school year. Vandalia Christian School of Greensboro won state titles in basketball, soccer and cheerleading. I would like to take this time to congratulate all their squads.

The story of the boys' basketball team from Vandalia Christian School is all but ordinary. On February 23, the Vikings capped off the 2013 season with a 13–point win over Raleigh Christian Academy resulting in their first NCCSA Class 2–A championship in 28 years. The road was not easily traveled; they lost in the championship game the year before and one of their players, Will Zimmerman, was diagnosed with leukemia and had to undergo chemotherapy treatments through the rest of 2012. Considering the circumstances of making it deep into the playoffs just to meet defeat, and the tragic diagnosis of a teammate, you would have expected to see a demoralized team the following year. The Vikings, however, did the opposite. They turned defeat into a learning experience—and the strength of Zimmerman into spirit—and they carried his jersey to every game to lay over an empty seat on the bench giving them the desire to make a run at the title.

Lead by Head Coach Tommy Adams and Assistant Luke Adams, their hands were full with an incredibly tense game. Raleigh Christian nearly overcame a 20-point deficit despite having one of its senior players go down with an injury and transported off the court by medical personnel. Vandalia would hold on for the win thanks to the supporting cast of players including Tyler Metcalf, Houston Miller, Michael Fields, Andrew Owen, Chase McNeil, Aaron Whittman, Christian Gravely, Tyler Christian Daniels, Zachary Dark, Brandon McDowell, James Wagner, Ethan Willis, Will Zimmerman, and Nathaniel Hobbs. And behind the scenes, managers Kloe Atkinson, Kani Totten, Storm Somers, and Gabriel Fields aided the cause. Coach Adams said the circumstances surrounding Zimmerman gave the team added motivation to get back to the championship game. With his cancer in remission, we are proud to announce that Will sat courtside to motivate and cheer his team to victory.

Vandalia's varsity boys' soccer team also experienced success when it won the NCCSA 2–A state championship. It was the Viking soccer team's first title since 1994. They were coached by true Viking blood, VCS alumnus, Coach Jason McCall. With goalie Jeffrey Welker accounting for six saves, the Vikings took on Wilmington Christian on October 27, 2012, with a stifling defensive approach, shutting out Wilmington 2–0.

VCS scored both goals in the first half with a header by Houston Miller and then a put back by Joshua McClelland. Both goals were only separated by 10 minutes, giving Wilmington Christian an early uphill battle from which they could not overcome.

Assistant Coach Junior Hannig accompanied Coach McCall in their quest for the elusive state title with the assistance of first team all-state Joshua McClelland, second team all-state Michael Matthews and Houston Miller, along with Tyler Metcalf, Jasper White, Zachary Dark, Jake Stone, Cates Banner, Jeffrey Welker, Matthew Hobbs, Arthur Ascensio, Will Zimmerman, Andrew Strickland, Colton Toft, and Bradley Casey.

Every team will tell you that they need people cheering for them in their quest for glory. In the case of Vandalia Christian School, the teams with Vikings on their chests were supported by a cheerleading squad that also was crowned state champion this school year.

Lead by head Coach Kim Hazelwood, the VCS cheerleaders included Ally Crook, Morgan Kennedy, Alyce Lentz, Morgan McDowell, Victoria Johnson, Ali Willard, Leanne Powell, Grace Wilson, Lauren Michaels, and Ashley Pollard.

All in all, it has been quite a year for the students, faculty, staff, and families of Vandalia Christian School. On behalf of the citizens of the Sixth District of North Carolina, we congratulate Principal Jeremy Cordova, Athletic Director Luke Oates, and the basketball, soccer, and cheerleading squads of VCS for their state championships.

COMMENDING CATE FULKERSON FOR RECOGNITION AS THE RESTON CITIZEN ASSOCIATION CITIZEN OF THE YEAR FOR 2013

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Cate Fulkerson of Reston for her recognition as the Reston Citizen Association Citizen of the Year for 2012.

The Reston Citizens Association was founded in 1967 to promote and protect Reston's founding principles by serving as a non–partisan forum for all residents and as an advocate for the community with County and State governments.

The RCA Citizen of the Year award dates back to 1976 and is awarded to someone whose actions are consistent with the goals of Reston and the RCA. Recipients are recognized for contributing to the quality of life in Reston and for helping people in need.

Cate Fulkerson, a Reston native, is best known throughout the community for her various roles on the staff of the Reston Association, where she has worked since 1991 and now serves as second in command of an 80–person staff. Countless Restonians have benefitted from her outstanding customer service, efficiency, and professionalism. Cate insists that no one who contacts her organization with a problem or question is ever told to ''call someone else.''

Cate's service also extends deep into the community and she is well known as a ''powerhouse of enthusiasm'' in many endeavors. She has led the effort to bring the Character Counts program and Ethics Day to Reston schools, helped plan Reston's annual Martin Luther King Day celebration, organized walks to help the homeless, collected Christmas presents for needy kids, and served as Board President of Leadership Fairfax. Her dedication to Reston has been recognized by multiple community organizations, including the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, which presented Cate with its Volunteer of the Year for 2012.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues rise to join me in congratulating Cate Fulkerson for this award and thanking her for her committed and selfless service to our community.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN SUSTAINING AGRICULTURE (CISA) SOUTH DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding work of Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture throughout western Massachusetts for the past twenty years. The organization has grown from a small group of farmers to a community of restaurants, farmers, neighbors, and local businesses. CISA has increased the visibility of locally produced food through its highly successful ''buy local'' campaign—the longest running in the country—and supported the growth of farmers' markets in Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties to include over 50 local produce markets including seven winter markets.

The Pioneer Valley, and the nation as a whole, Mr. Speaker, has benefitted greatly from the contributions of CISA. Over five years, CISA helped to increase the total acreage of farmland in Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties by four percent and doubled the annual total dollar amount of agricultural products sold by local farmers to the community to nearly eight and a half million dollars.

Mr. Speaker, western Massachusetts is blessed by some of the most picturesque landscapes in this country. Because of CISA's commitment to supporting farmers and preserving these farmlands, we can pass this incredible resource on to the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture on twenty years of vital service to the community of western Massachusetts.

TO ACKNOWLEDGE VOLUNTEER FAIRFAX AND THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2013 SERVICE AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 15, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize and give thanks acknowledge and give thanks to Volunteer Fairfax and the extraordinary honorees of the 21st Annual Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards.

Volunteer Fairfax matches the skills and interests of volunteers to the needs of local non–profit organizations. Volunteer time and services valued at nearly $1 million are contributed annually to more than 900 public and

private non–profit agencies, which enables these organizations to meet crucial community needs. With great pleasure, I submit the following names of the Service Award honorees into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Community Champions: Amy Gould, Braddock District; Bill Sudow, Dranesville District; Stuart Rakoff, Hunter Mill District; Suzette Kern, Lee District; Ken and Camille Mittelholtz, Mason District; Shep Crow, Mount District; Dunn Loring Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department, Providence District; Cherilyn Murphy, Springfield District; Yom Chu Kim, Sully District; Stella Koch, At–Large.

Adult Volunteer 250 Hours & Over: Hazel Poole.

Adult Volunteer 250 Hours & Under: Robin Falci.

Adult Volunteer Group: Gracing Spaces.

Corporate Volunteer Program: Balfour Beatty Spirit.

Fairfax County Volunteer: Bobbi Cippel.

Fairfax County Volunteer Program: Stronger Together Supervised Visitation and Exchange Program.

Family Volunteer: The Jenkins Family.

Lifetime Achievement: Irma Clifton.

Integrate Individual: Alcira Pernot.

Integrate Group: Centreville Immigration Forum.

Rising Star: Mike Sneed.

Senior Volunteer: Ann Marquis.

Volunteer Program: Fairfax Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).

Youth Volunteer: Benjamin Roodberg.

Youth Volunteer Group: Messiah in Mission from Messiah United Methodist Church.

Youth Benchmark 100 Honorees: Sandhya Chandar, Laura Kidd, Aiden Levy, Gabrielle Levy, Christopher Marty, Erin McFarland, Abrar Omeish, Timothy Pham, Katherine Rohloff, Benjamin Roodberg, Madeline Roodberg, Zack Sanders, Zoe Smith, Leilani Wolf.

Benchmark 250 Honorees: Jael Abdelwahed, Terry Angelotti, Kathi Baker, Maureen Barrett, Leona Bates, Ruth Benker, Charles Camp, Mark Cohen, Robert Dutrow, Denise Echols, Leslie Fetty, Anne Fogle, Emilie Gillanders, Johan Glembocki, Richard Goehner, Ginger Higgins, Debra Hoeg, David Kline, Cathy Lanni, Melissa Lopes, Michelle Lord, Ludeane Maughan, Bev Morse, Peter Mory, Alcira Pernot, Jane Perry, Helen Repasy, Sarah Samuel, Ruth Schrott, Vince Sescoe, Mike Sneed, Emily Ward, Grace Wolf.

Benchmark 500 Honorees: Mary Anne Cummins, Don Di Spirito, Mary Lee Di Spirito, Mary Ann Lecos, Andrew Levy, Ann Marquis, Diane Sandford.

Benchmark 1000 Honorees: Mohammad Alam, Naila Alam.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues and I join in acknowledging Volunteer Fairfax for 37 years of outstanding community service and in thanking the 2013 Service Award honorees for their incredible contributions to our community.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, April 16, 2013 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

APRIL 17

9 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of Defense
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the National Guard and Reserve.
SD–192

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a briefing on the situation in Syria.
SH–216

10 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of Education.
SD–138

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development
To hold hearings to examine helping homeowners harmed by foreclosures, focusing on ensuring accountability and transparency in foreclosure reviews, part 2.
SD–538

Committee on Finance
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014.
SD–215

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of Homeland Security.
SD–342

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Business meeting to consider the nomination of Sylvia Mathews Burwell, of West Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget.
SD–342

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for the Small Business Administration.
SR–428A

2 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Personnel
To hold hearings to examine the Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–232A

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
To hold hearings to examine nuclear forces and policies in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SVC–217.
SR–222

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine the future of passenger rail, focusing on what's next for the Northeast Corridor.
SR–253

APRIL 18

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine national security and foreign policy priorities in the fiscal year 2014 International Affairs budget.
SD–562

Joint Economic Committee
To hold hearings to examine the Federal Reserve System at 100, focusing on monetary policy.
SH–216

9:45 a.m.
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Business meeting to consider the nomination of Ernest J. Moniz, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Energy.
SD–366

10 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the Federal Aviation Administration.
SD–138

Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine the current and future worldwide threats to the national security of the United States; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session.
SD–106

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), focusing on evaluating FHFA as regulator and conservator.
SD–538

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of Energy.
SD–366

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Thomas Edward Perez, of Maryland, to be Secretary of Labor.
SD–192

Committee on the Judiciary
Business meeting to consider the nominations of Gregory Alan Phillips, of Wyoming, to be United States Circuit

Judge for the Tenth Circuit, Karol Virginia Mason, of Georgia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, and S. 607, to improve the provisions relating to the privacy of electronic communications.

SD–226

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the Food and Drug Administration.

SD–124

2 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

SD–138

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of State and Foreign Operations.

SD–192

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

To hold hearings to examine the role of the Department of Defense science and technology enterprise for innovation and affordability in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–232A

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support

To hold hearings to examine the current readiness of U.S. forces in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–222

Select Committee on Intelligence

To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.

SH–219

APRIL 19

10 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

SH–216

APRIL 22

10 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To resume hearings to examine comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

SH–216

APRIL 23

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the Department of the Army in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–106

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for the Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

SR–253

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine S. 306, to authorize all Bureau of Reclamation conduit facilities for hydropower development under Federal Reclamation law, S. 545, to improve hydropower, and an original bill to promote energy savings in residential and commercial buildings and industry.

SD–366

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights

To hold hearings to examine drone wars, focusing on the constitutional and counterterrorism implications of targeted killing.

SD–226

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

To hold hearings to examine proliferation prevention programs at the Department of Energy and at the Department of Defense in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SVC–217.

SR–222

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine S. 59, to designate a Distinguished Flying Cross National Memorial at the March Field Air Museum in Riverside, California, S. 155, to designate a mountain in the State of Alaska as Denali, S. 156, to allow for the harvest of gull eggs by the Huna Tlingit people within Glacier Bay National Park in the State of Alaska, S. 219, to establish the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area in the State of Pennsylvania, S. 225, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of alternatives for commemorating and interpreting the role of the Buffalo Soldiers in the early years of the National Parks, S. 228, to establish the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area, S. 285, to designate the Valles Caldera National Preserve as a unit of the National Park System, S. 305, to authorize the acquisition of core battlefield land at Champion Hill, Port Gibson, and Raymond for addition to Vicksburg National Military Park, S. 349, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate a segment of the Beaver, Chipuxet, Queen, Wood, and Pawcatuck Rivers in the States of Connecticut and Rhode Island for study for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, S. 371, to establish the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park, to dedicate the Park to John H. Chafee, S. 476, to amend the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Development Act to extend to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Commission, S. 486, to authorize pedestrian and motorized vehicular access in Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area, S. 507, to establish the Manhattan Project National Historical Park in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Los Alamos, New Mexico, and Hanford, Washington, and S. 615, to establish Coltsville National Historical Park in the State of Connecticut.

SD–366

APRIL 24

10 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Personnel

To resume hearings to examine the Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–222

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine business practices of durable medical equipment companies.

SD–342

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the National Nuclear Security Administration.

SD–192

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Airland

To hold hearings to examine tactical aircraft programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support

To hold hearings to examine military construction, environmental, and base closure programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–232A

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for Tribal Programs.

SD–628

APRIL 25

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the Department of the Navy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session.

SD–106

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine drought and the effect on energy and water management decisions.

SD–366

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining

To hold hearings to examine S. 27, to clarify authority granted under the Act entitled ''An Act to define the exterior boundary of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation in the State

of Utah'', S. 28, to provide for the conveyance of a small parcel of National Forest System land in the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Utah to Brigham Young University, S. 159, to designate the Wovoka Wilderness and provide for certain land conveyances in Lyon County, Nevada, S. 241, to establish the Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area in the State of New Mexico, S. 255, to withdraw certain Federal land and interests in that land from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws and disposition under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws, S. 256, to amend Public Law 93–435 with respect to the Northern Mariana Islands, providing parity with Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa, S. 258, to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to improve the management of grazing leases and permits, S. 312, to adjust the boundary of the Carson National Forest, New Mexico, S. 327, to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative agreements with State foresters authorizing State foresters to provide certain forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration and protection services, S. 340, to provide for the settlement of certain claims under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, S. 341, to designate certain lands in San Miguel, Ouray, and San Juan Counties, Colorado, as wilderness, S. 342, to designate the Pine Forest Range Wilderness area in Humboldt County, Nevada, S. 353, to designate certain land in the State of Oregon as wilderness, to make additional wild and scenic river designations in the State of Oregon, S. 360, to amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to expand the authorization of the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Interior to provide service opportunities for young Americans; help restore the nation's natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational and scenic resources; train a new generation of public land managers and enthusiasts; and promote the value of public service, S. 366, to amend the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 to require the Bureau of Land Management to provide a claimant of a small miner waiver from claim maintenance fees with a period of 60 days after written receipt of 1 or more defects is provided to the claimant by registered mail to cure the 1 or more defects or pay the claim maintenance fee, S. 368, to reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, S. 447, to provide for the conveyance of certain cemeteries that are located on National Forest System land in Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota, and S. 609, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Federal land in San Juan County, New Mexico.

SD–366

MAY 7

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine the Department of the Air Force in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SH–216

MAY 8

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Airland
To hold hearings to examine Army modernization in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–222

Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To hold hearings to examine Navy shipbuilding programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–232A

JUNE 11

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Airland
Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014.

SD–G50

11 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support
Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014.

SD–G50

2 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Personnel
Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014.

SD–G50

3:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014.

SR–232A

6 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014.

SR–232A

JUNE 12

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014.

SR–222

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Closed business meeting to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014.

SR–222

JUNE 13

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Closed business meeting to continue to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014.

SR–222

JUNE 14

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Closed business meeting to continue to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014.

SR–222

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S2629–S2655

Measures Introduced: Eleven bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 720–730, and S. Res. 97. **Page S2649**

Measures Reported:

Special Report entitled ''Inquiry Into U.S. Costs and Allied Contributions to Support the U.S. Military Presence Overseas''. (S. Rept. No. 113–12) **Page S2649**

Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act–Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 11 a.m., on Tuesday, April 16, 2013, Senate resume consideration of S. 649, to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale, and the time until the recess for the caucus meetings be for debate only. **Page S2655**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By a unanimous vote of 92 yeas (Vote No. EX. 96), Beverly Reid O'Connell, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California. **Pages S2644, S2655**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Vernon S. Broderick, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Rachel Elise Barkow, of New York, to be a Member of the United States Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2017.

Charles R. Breyer, of California, to be a Member of the United States Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2015.

William H. Pryor, Jr., of Alabama, to be a Member of the United States Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2017.

5 Army nominations in the rank of general.

6 Coast Guard nominations in the rank of admiral.

Routine lists in the Navy. **Page S2655**

Messages from the House: **Page S2648**

Measures Referred: **Pages S2648–49**

Measures Read the First Time: **Page S2649**

Enrolled Bills Presented: **Page S2649**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S2649–51**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S2651–54**

Additional Statements: **Page S2648**

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: **Pages S2654–55**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S2655**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—96) **Pages S2647–48**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 2 p.m. and adjourned at 6:23 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, April 16, 2013. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S2655.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

VETERANS' PROGRAMS BUDGET

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for Veterans' Programs, after receiving testimony from Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary, Robert A. Petzel, Under Secretary for Health, Allison A. Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits, Steve L. Muro, Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, Stephen W. Warren, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Office of Information and Technology, and W. Todd Grams, Executive in Charge for the Office of Management and Chief Financial Officer, all of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 27 public bills, H.R. 1549–1575; and 4 resolutions, H.J. Res. 39; H. Con. Res. 31; and H. Res. 160–161, were introduced. **Pages H2024–26**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H2027–28**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 624, to provide for the sharing of certain cyber threat intelligence and cyber threat information between the intelligence community and cybersecurity entities, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 113–39). **Page H2024**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Holding to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1995**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:13 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H1996**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:12 p.m. and reconvened at 5:01 p.m. **Page H1998**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Government Accountability Office Improvement Act: H.R. 1162, amended, to amend title 31, United States Code, to make improvements in the Government Accountability Office, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 408 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 103; **Pages H1998–99, H2010–11**

District of Columbia Chief Financial Officer Vacancy Act: H.R. 1246, to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to provide that the District of Columbia Treasurer or one of the Deputy Chief Financial Officers of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer of the District of Columbia may perform the functions and duties of the Office in an acting capacity if there is a vacancy in the Office; and **Pages H1999–H2001**

Contracting and Tax Accountability Act of 2013: H.R. 882, amended, to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 407 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 104. **Pages H2001–04, H2011–12**

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in honor of the victims of today's attack in Boston, MA. **Page H2011**

Suspension—Failed: The House failed to agree to suspend the rules and pass the following measure:

Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act of 2013: H.R. 249, to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that persons having seriously delinquent tax debts shall be ineligible for Federal employment, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 250 yeas to 159 nays, Roll No. 105. **Pages H2004–10, H2012**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H2012.

Senate Referral: S. Con. Res. 8 was held at the desk.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2010–11, H2011–12, and H2012. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Committee Meetings

ONGOING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Ongoing Intelligence Activities". This was a closed hearing.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2013

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the situation in Afghanistan, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on the Budget: to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget and revenue request for fiscal year 2014, 3 p.m., SD–608.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine aviation safety, focusing on the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) progress on key safety initiatives, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for the Forest Service, 10 a.m., SD–366.

Subcommittee on Water and Power, to hold hearings to examine S. 211, to amend certain definitions contained in the Provo River Project Transfer Act for purposes of clarifying certain property descriptions, S. 284, a bill to

transfer certain facilities, easements, and rights-of-way to Fort Sumner Irrigation District, New Mexico, S. 510, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain interests in Federal land acquired for the Scofield Project in Carbon County, Utah S. 659, to reauthorize the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, S.J. Res. 12, to consent to certain amendments enacted by the legislature of the State of Hawaii to the Hawaiian Homes Commission, Act, 1920 H.R. 316, to reinstate and transfer certain hydroelectric licenses and extend the deadline for commencement of construction of certain hydroelectric projects, S. 684, to amend the Mni Wiconi Project Act of 1988 to facilitate completion of the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Supply System, S. 693, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the City of Hermiston, Oregon, water recycling and reuse project, and S. 715, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to use designated funding to pay for construction of authorized rural water projects, 2:30 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine tax fraud and tax identity theft, focusing on moving forward with solutions, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on African Affairs, to hold hearings to examine ongoing conflict in Eastern Congo, 9:45 a.m., SD–419.

Full Committee, business meeting to consider S. 657, to eliminate conditions in foreign prisons and other detention facilities that do not meet primary indicators of health, sanitation, and safety, S. Res. 90, standing with the people of Kenya following their national and local elections on March 4, 2013, and urging a peaceful and credible resolution of electoral disputes in the courts, S. Res. 65, strongly supporting the full implementation of United States and international sanctions on Iran and urging the President to continue to strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation, the nomination of Jacob J. Lew, of New York, to be United States Governor of the International Monetary Fund, United States Governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, United States Governor of the Inter-American Development Bank, and United States Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and lists in the Foreign Service, 2:15 p.m., S–116, Capitol.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine college affordability, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights, to hold an oversight hearing to examine the enforcement of the antitrust laws, 2:30 p.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, public and outside witness hearing day, 9:30 a.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, public and outside witness hearing day, 1 p.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies, hearing on USDA Budget, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Defense, hearing on Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Overview, 10 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Homeland Security, hearing on United States Coast Guard Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Request, 10 a.m., H–140 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, hearing on Department of Labor Budget, 10 a.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, hearing on Department of Transportation Fiscal Year 2014 Request, 10 a.m., 2358–A Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing on the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Budget Request from the Department of the Navy, 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled ''The Readiness Posture of the U.S. Army'', 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Intelligence, Emerging Threats and Capabilities, hearing entitled ''Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Budget Request for Department of Defense Science and Technology Programs'', 3:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on the Budget, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The President's Fiscal Year 2014 Revenue and Economic Policy Proposals'', 10 a.m., 210 Cannon.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training, hearing entitled ''Keeping College within Reach: The Role of Federal Student Aid Programs'', 11 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''A Continuing Investigation into the Fungal Meningitis Outbreak and Whether It Could Have Been Prevented'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Energy and Power, markup on H.R. 3, the ''Northern Route Approval Act'', 2 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit, hearing entitled ''Examining Community Bank Regulatory Burdens'', 10 a.m. 2128 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Who is Too Big to Fail: Does Dodd-Frank Authorize the Government to Break Up Financial Institutions?'', 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats hearing entitled ''China's Rapid Political and Economic Advances in Central Asia and Russia'', 2 p.m., 2200 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled ''Kenya's 2013 Elections: An Effective Assistance Model?'', 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Mismanagement at the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property and the Internet, hearing entitled ''Abusive Patent Litigation: The Issues Impacting American Competitiveness and Job Creation at the International Trade Commission and Beyond'', 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation, hearing on the following measures: H.R. 250, to amend the Antiquities Act of 1906 to place additional requirements on the establishment of national monuments under that Act, and for other purposes; H.R. 382, the ''Preserve Land Freedom for Americans Act''; H.R. 432, to prohibit the further extension or establishment of national monuments in Nevada except by express authorization of Congress; H.R. 758, the ''Utah Land Sovereignty Act''; H.R. 1512, the ''New Mexico Land Sovereignty Act''; H.R. 1434, the ''Montana Land Sovereignty Act''; H.R. 1439, the ''Idaho Land Sovereignty Act''; H.R. 1459, the ''Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act''; H.R. 855, the ''San Antonio Missions National Historical Park Boundary Expansion Act of 2013''; 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Energy and Minerals Resources, hearing on H.R. 3, the ''Northern Route Approval Act'', 2 p.m., 1334 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Water and Power, hearing entitled ''Examining the Proposed Fiscal Year 2014 Spending, Priorities and the Missions of the Bureau of Reclamation, the Four Power Marketing Administrations and the U.S. Geological Survey's Water Program'', 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Open to Visitors? Assessing the Federal Efforts to Minimize the Sequester's Impact on Access to Our Nation's Capital and National Treasures'', 9:30 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee hearing on H.R. 624, the ''Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act'', 3 p.m.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Oversight and Subcommittee on Energy hearing entitled ''Assessing the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Wind Energy Incentives'', 2 p.m. 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, hearing entitled ''The Foundations for a New Water Resources Development Act'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, hearing on the proposed fiscal year 2014 budget request for the U.S. Coast Guard and related marine transportation programs, 2 p.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, hearing on the following measures: H.R. 569 the, ''Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013''; H.R. 570, the ''American Heroes COLA Act''; H.R. 602, the ''Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act''; H.R. 671, the ''Ruth Moore Act of 2013''; H.R. 679, the ''Honor America's Guard-Reserve Retirees Act''; H.R. 733, the ''Access to Veterans Benefits Improvement Act''; H.R. 894, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the supervision of fiduciaries of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and H.R. 1405, to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include an appeals form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought, 2:30 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Human Resources, hearing on the Implementation of 2012 Unemployment Insurance Reforms, 2 p.m., 1100 Longworth.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of April 16 through April 19, 2013

Senate Chamber

On *Tuesday*, at approximately 11 a.m., Senate will resume consideration of S. 649, Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Appropriations: April 17, Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the National Guard and Reserve, 9 a.m., SD–192.

April 17, Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of Education, 10 a.m., SD–138.

April 18, Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the Federal Aviation Administration, 10 a.m., SD–138.

April 18, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the Food and Drug Administration, 10:30 a.m., SD–124.

April 18, Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of Veterans Affairs, 2 p.m., SD–138.

April 18, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of State and Foreign Operations, 2:30 p.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: April 16, to hold hearings to examine the situation in Afghanistan, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

April 17, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014

and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a briefing on the situation in Syria, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

April 17, Subcommittee on Personnel, to hold hearings to examine the Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program, 2 p.m., SR–232A.

April 17, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, to hold hearings to examine nuclear forces and policies in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SVC–217, 2:30 p.m., SR–222.

April 18, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the current and future worldwide threats to the national security of the United States; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session, 10 a.m., SD–106.

April 18, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, to hold hearings to examine the role of the Department of Defense science and technology enterprise for innovation and affordability in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program, 2:30 p.m., SR–232A.

April 18, Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, to hold hearings to examine the current readiness of U.S. forces in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2014 and the Future Years Defense Program, 2:30 p.m., SR–222.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: April 17, Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development, to hold hearings to examine helping homeowners harmed by foreclosures, focusing on ensuring accountability and transparency in foreclosure reviews, part 2, 10 a.m., SD–538.

April 18, Full Committee, to hold an oversight hearing to examine the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), focusing on evaluating FHFA as regulator and conservator, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on the Budget: April 16, to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget and revenue request for fiscal year 2014, 3 p.m., SD–608.

April 17, Full Committee, business meeting to consider the nomination of Sylvia Mathews Burwell, of West Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Time to be announced, Room to be announced.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: April 16, to hold hearings to examine aviation safety, focusing on the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) progress on key safety initiatives, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

April 17, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the future of passenger rail, focusing on what's next for the Northeast Corridor, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: April 16, to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for the Forest Service, 10 a.m., SD–366.

April 16, Subcommittee on Water and Power, to hold hearings to examine S. 211, to amend certain definitions contained in the Provo River Project Transfer Act for purposes of clarifying certain property descriptions, S. 284, a bill to transfer certain facilities, easements, and rights-of-way to Fort Sumner Irrigation District, New Mexico, S. 510, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain interests in Federal land acquired for the Scofield Project in Carbon County, Utah, S. 659, to reauthorize the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, S.J. Res. 12, to consent to certain amendments enacted by the legislature of the State of Hawaii to the Hawaiian Homes Commission, Act, 1920, H.R. 316, to reinstate and transfer certain hydroelectric licenses and extend the deadline for commencement of construction of certain hydroelectric projects, S. 684, to amend the Mni Wiconi Project Act of 1988 to facilitate completion of the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Supply System, S. 693, to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the City of Hermiston, Oregon, water recycling and reuse project, and S. 715, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to use designated funding to pay for construction of authorized rural water projects, 2:30 p.m., SD–366.

April 18, Full Committee, business meeting to consider the nomination of Ernest J. Moniz, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Energy, 9:45 a.m., SD–366.

April 18, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of Energy, 10 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: April 16, to hold hearings to examine tax fraud and tax identity theft, focusing on moving forward with solutions, 10 a.m., SD–215.

April 17, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: April 16, Subcommittee on African Affairs, to hold hearings to examine ongoing conflict in Eastern Congo, 9:45 a.m., SD–419.

April 16, Full Committee, business meeting to consider S. 657, to eliminate conditions in foreign prisons and other detention facilities that do not meet primary indicators of health, sanitation, and safety, S. Res. 90, standing with the people of Kenya following their national and local elections on March 4, 2013, and urging a peaceful and credible resolution of electoral disputes in the courts, S. Res. 65, strongly supporting the full implementation of United States and international sanctions on Iran and urging the President to continue to strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation, the nomination of Jacob J. Lew, of New York, to be United States Governor of the International Monetary Fund, United States Governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, United States Governor of the Inter-American Development Bank, and United States Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and lists in the Foreign Service, 2:15 p.m., S–116, Capitol.

April 18, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine national security and foreign policy priorities in the fiscal year 2014 International Affairs budget, 9:30 a.m., SD–562.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: April 16, to hold hearings to examine college affordability, 10 a.m., SD–430.

April 18, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Thomas Edward Perez, of Maryland, to be Secretary of Labor, 10 a.m., SD–192.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: April 17, business meeting to consider the nomination of Sylvia Mathews Burwell, of West Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget, 10 a.m., SD–342.

April 17, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for the Department of Homeland Security, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: April 16, Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights, to hold an oversight hearing to examine the enforcement of the antitrust laws, 2:30 p.m., SD–226.

April 18, Full Committee, business meeting to consider the nominations of Gregory Alan Phillips, of Wyoming, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit, Karol Virginia Mason, of Georgia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, and S. 607, to improve the provisions relating to the privacy of electronic communications, 10 a.m., SD–226.

April 19, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine comprehensive immigration reform legislation, 10 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: April 17, to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2014 for the Small Business Administration, 10 a.m., SR–428A.

Select Committee on Intelligence: April 16, to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

April 18, Full Committee, to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House Committees

Committee on Appropriations, April 17, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, public and outside witness hearing day, 1 p.m., B–308 Rayburn.

April 17, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies, hearing on USDA Research, Education, and Economic Budget, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

April 17, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, hearing on Customs and Border Protection Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Request, 10 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

April 17, Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, hearing on Department of Housing and Urban Development Fiscal Year 2014 Request, 10 a.m., 2358–A Rayburn.

April 17, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science and Related Agencies, hearing on Federal Bureau of Prisons, 10:30 a.m., H–309 Capitol.

April 17, Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, hearing on Department of State Fiscal Year 2014 Budget, 2 p.m., 2359 Rayburn.

April 18, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 9:30 a.m., B–308 Rayburn.

April 18, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and Related Agencies, hearing on USDA Marketing and Regulatory Programs, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

April 18, Subcommittee on Defense, hearing on Central Command/International Security Assistance Force, 10 a.m., H–140 Capitol.

April 18, Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, hearing on Department of Veterans Affairs Budget, 10:30 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

April 18, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science, and Related Agencies, hearing on Department of Justice Budget Request, 2 p.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, April 17, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Recent Developments in Afghanistan'', 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

April 17, Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, hearing entitled ''Fiscal Year 2014 Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force Combat Aviation Programs'', 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

April 17, Subcommittee on Intelligence, Emerging Threats and Capabilities, hearing entitled ''Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Budget Request for U.S. Special Operations Command and U.S. Special Operations Forces'', 3:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, April 17, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1406, the ''Working Families Flexibility Act of 2013'', 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, pril 18, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''A Financial Review of the Department of Health and Human Services and Its FY 2014 Budget'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

April 18, Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade, hearing on discussion draft of the ''Global Investment in American Jobs Act of 2013'', 9:30 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, April 17, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Examining the SEC's Failure to Implement the JOBS Act and its Impact on Economic Growth'', 2 p.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, April 17, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Securing U.S. Interests Abroad: The FY 2014 Foreign Affairs Budget'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

April 18, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled ''Tier Rankings in the Fight Against Human Trafficking'', 1 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, April 18, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The President's FY 2014 Budget Request for the Department of Homeland Security'', 9 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, April 17, Full Committee, meeting to Authorize the Chairman to issue a subpoena to the Department of Justice, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

April 18, Subcommittee on Constitution and Civil Justice, hearing on the ''Private Property Rights Protection Act'', 9 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, April 17, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''State Lands vs. Federal Lands Oil and Gas Production: What State Regulators are doing right'', 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

April 18, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs, hearing entitled ''Spending for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Office of Insular Affairs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the President's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Request for these Agencies'', 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

April 18, Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation, hearing on H.R. 657, the ''Grazing Improvement Act''; H.R. 696, the ''Lyon County Economic Development and Conservation Act''; H.R. 934, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act related to a segment of the Lower Merced River in California, and for other purposes; and H.R. 993, the ''Fruit Heights Land Conveyance Act'', 10 a.m., 1334 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, April 17, Subcommittee on National Security, hearing entitled ''Contracting to Feed U.S. Troops in Afghanistan: How did the Defense Department end up in Multi-Billion Dollar Billing Dispute?'', 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

April 17, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Options to Bring the Postal Service Back from Insolvency'', 9:30 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

April 18, Subcommittee on National Security; and Subcommittee on Government Operations, hearing entitled ''Sequestration Oversight: Prioritizing Security over Administrative Costs at TSA'', 9:30 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, April 17, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''A Review of President's FY 2014 Budget Request for Science Agencies'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

April 17, Subcommittee on Research, hearing entitled ''An Overview of the National Science Foundation Budget for Fiscal Year 2014'', 2 p.m., 2318 Rayburn.

April 18, Subcommittee on Technology, hearing entitled ''An Overview of the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Proposal at the National Institute of Standards and Technology'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, April 17, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Health Care Law: Implementation and Small Businesses'', 1 p.m., 2360 Rayburn.

April 18, Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax and Capital Access, hearing entitled ''Innovation as a Catalyst for New Jobs'', 10 a.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, April 17, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''GAO Review: Are Additional Federal Courthouses Justified?'', 10:30 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Ways and Means, April 18, Subcommittee on Social Security, hearing on the President's and Other Bipartisan Entitlement Reform Proposals, 9:30 a.m., B–318 Rayburn.

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, April 18, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Ongoing Intelligence Activities'', 9 a.m., HVC–304. This is a closed hearing.

Joint Meetings

Joint Economic Committee: April 18, to hold hearings to examine the Federal Reserve System at 100, focusing on monetary policy, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Tuesday, April 16

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 1 hour), Senate will resume consideration of S. 649, Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act.

(Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Tuesday, April 16

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of measures under suspension of the rules.

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