United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2014 No. 49

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 27, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROB WOODALL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

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

Eternal God, through Whom we see what we could be and what we can become, thank You for giving us another day.

Send Your spirit upon the Members of this people's House to encourage them in their official tasks. Be with them and with all who labor here to serve this great Nation and its people.

Assure them that whatever their responsibilities, You provide the grace to enable them to be faithful in their duties, and the wisdom to be conscious of their obligations and fulfill them with integrity.

Remind us all of the dignity of work, and teach us to use our talents and abilities in ways that are honorable and just and are of benefit to those we serve.

May all that is done 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 gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. JENKINS 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CONGRATULATIONS MARS CHOCOLATE

(Ms. JENKINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JENKINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mars Chocolate North America on the grand opening of their state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Topeka, Kansas.

This is the first Mars Chocolate factory built in the U.S. in 35 years. Mars has invested more than $270 million to build this facility, bringing hundreds of jobs to the Topeka area. They will be manufacturing Snickers as well as 39 million individual M&Ms per day.

I want to also congratulate the city of Topeka, Shawnee County, the chamber of commerce, and the State of Kansas for attracting world-class manufacturing to our State. Mars conducted an extensive search, reviewing 80 potential sites. Our talented workforce, access to key infrastructure, and positive business environment all made Topeka the best choice.

Thank you, Mars, for making Topeka your home in the heartland, and welcome to Kansas.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to recognize the month of March as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month. MS is a debilitating, chronic disease that attacks the central nervous system and causes visual problems, overwhelming fatigue, difficulty with balance and coordination, and impaired mobility.

One of my most trusted and long-term district staff members, Ms. Robin McCray, who has been with me for many, many years—first, when I was in the California State Legislature and now in Congress—has a son, Ian, who is now 42 years of age, who has MS.

Ian was diagnosed at the age of 29, at the most productive time in his life. He was an avid snowboarder, an outdoorsman, and practiced masonry. MS has stolen these things away from him.

There is no cure for MS, which is why we need advocates to help fight this terrible disease. I have seen, through Robin and Ian, how MS not only affects the individual, but the entire family.

Today I speak for Ian, but I advocate for the 400,000 Americans diagnosed with MS.

NATIONAL MULTIPLE MYELOMA AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize March as National Multiple

Printed on recycled paper.

Myeloma Awareness Month. Myeloma is a cancer of the bone marrow that can have a variety of effects on the body, ranging from bone pain to organ failure. The National Cancer Institute estimates that over 22,000 new cases will be diagnosed and 11,000 deaths will occur due to myeloma this year.

While myeloma is not curable, it is treatable. I thank my colleagues, Congressman BACHUS and Congressman RANGEL, for drafting a resolution to establish March as National Multiple Myeloma Awareness Month and the International Myeloma Foundation for raising awareness of the disease year-round.

Additionally, as Congress begins to develop a budget, I encourage strong support for medical research, increasing funding to the National Institutes of Health to $32 billion.

Finally, I urge the House leadership to bring the Cancer Drug Coverage Parity Act to the floor, a bill I introduced to make sure that patients with myeloma and other cancers who are prescribed oral chemotherapy by their doctors will have the insurance coverage they need to treat their illness and to get healthy.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

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

Mr. BARROW of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to shed some light on a very serious issue facing more than 15 million Medicare Advantage recipients across the country, including more than 300,000 seniors in my home State of Georgia.

Medicare Advantage provides care and support to the constituents of every Member of this body. It reduces the need for hospitalization and reduces health care costs by focusing on prevention and disease management. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recently proposed a 5.9 percent cut to this program which will reduce benefits and increase premiums by $35 to $75 per month for beneficiaries all across the country.

This month, my colleague from the other side of the aisle, Dr. BILL CASSIDY, and I led an effort with over 200 Members of this body to urge the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to prevent these devastating cuts to this program.

I urge this body and our friends in the Senate to do all we can to preserve this critical program. We simply cannot place the country's financial burdens on the back of seniors by undermining Medicare Advantage.

HONORING DR. FRANK KITAMOTO

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

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Frank Kitamoto and offer my condolences to his family and friends in light of his recent passing.

At the age of 2, Dr. Kitamoto and his family were among the 277 Bainbridge Island, Washington, residents forced from their homes during World War II and taken to a war relocation center in California. In total, 12,000 Japanese American Washingtonians were forced out of their homes for the duration of the war.

Dr. Kitamoto returned to Bainbridge Island after the end of the war and he began an oral history project. He traveled the country to educate others about Japanese American history and forced relocation during World War II. He served as president of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community for more than 25 years. Dr. Kitamoto also played an integral role in the installation of the Bainbridge Island Exclusion Memorial.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Kitamoto for his dedication to ensuring that the stories of this difficult period in American history are told. I am pleased to honor his legacy in the United States Congress today.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE CUTS PROPOSED FOR 2015 WOULD BE SHORTSIGHTED AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE

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

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, with all the questions surrounding health insurance today, it is vital that seniors can keep the health care coverage on which they depend. I remain committed to working in a bipartisan manner to address the long-term drivers of our debt. I also understand we must consider the impact the decisions we make have on real Americans.

Recent efforts to bring Medicare Advantage payments in line with traditional Medicare makes sense if you think of the budget solely as numbers on a spreadsheet; but we are seeing these cuts resulting in smaller networks of doctors, cuts to add-on benefits, and higher out-of-pocket limits, shifting the cost and burden onto our Nation's seniors on fixed incomes.

The Medicare Advantage cuts proposed for 2015 would be shortsighted and counterproductive if it meant elimination of health care innovations and led to hospital readmissions and worse health outcomes.

I add my voice to the growing bipartisan chorus calling for no more cuts to seniors on Medicare Advantage. I urge the administration to keep the rates flat for this year, protecting seniors' continued access to health care choices that they have earned after a lifetime of hard work.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 20 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 0942

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 9 o'clock and 42 minutes a.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.

PROTECTING ACCESS TO MEDICARE ACT OF 2014

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4302) to amend the Social Security Act to extend Medicare payments to physicians and other provisions of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4302

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 ''Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—MEDICARE EXTENDERS

Sec. 101. Physician payment update.
Sec. 102. Extension of work GPCI floor.
Sec. 103. Extension of therapy cap exceptions process.
Sec. 104. Extension of ambulance add-ons.
Sec. 105. Extension of increased inpatient hospital payment adjustment for certain low-volume hospitals.
Sec. 106. Extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program.
Sec. 107. Extension for specialized Medicare Advantage plans for special needs individuals.
Sec. 108. Extension of Medicare reasonable cost contracts.
Sec. 109. Extension of funding for quality measure endorsement, input, and selection.
Sec. 110. Extension of funding outreach and assistance for low-income programs.
Sec. 111. Extension of two-midnight rule.
Sec. 112. Technical changes to Medicare LTCH amendments.

TITLE II—OTHER HEALTH PROVISIONS

Sec. 201. Extension of the qualifying individual (QI) program.

Sec. 202. Temporary extension of transitional medical assistance (TMA).
Sec. 203. Extension of Medicaid and CHIP express lane option.
Sec. 204. Extension of special diabetes program for type I diabetes and for Indians.
Sec. 205. Extension of abstinence education.
Sec. 206. Extension of personal responsibility education program (PREP).
Sec. 207. Extension of funding for family-to-family health information centers.
Sec. 208. Extension of health workforce demonstration project for low-income individuals.
Sec. 209. Extension of maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting programs.
Sec. 210. Pediatric quality measures.
Sec. 211. Delay of effective date for Medicaid amendments relating to beneficiary liability settlements.
Sec. 212. Delay in transition from ICD–9 TO ICD–10 code sets.
Sec. 213. Elimination of limitation on deductibles for employer-sponsored health plans.
Sec. 214. GAO report on the Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education Program.
Sec. 215. Skilled nursing facility value-based purchasing.
Sec. 216. Improving Medicare policies for clinical diagnostic laboratory tests.
Sec. 217. Revisions under the Medicare ESRD prospective payment system.
Sec. 218. Quality incentives for computed tomography diagnostic imaging and promoting evidence-based care.
Sec. 219. Using funding from Transitional Fund for Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) Reform.
Sec. 220. Ensuring accurate valuation of services under the physician fee schedule.
Sec. 221. Medicaid DSH.
Sec. 222. Realignment of the Medicare sequester for fiscal year 2024.
Sec. 223. Demonstration programs to improve community mental health services.
Sec. 224. Assisted outpatient treatment grant program for individuals with serious mental illness.
Sec. 225. Exclusion from PAYGO scorecards.

TITLE I—MEDICARE EXTENDERS

SEC. 101. PHYSICIAN PAYMENT UPDATE.

Section 1848(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (15)—

(A) in the heading, by striking ''JANUARY THROUGH MARCH OF'';

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''for the period beginning on January 1, 2014, and ending on March 31, 2014''; and

(C) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in the heading, by striking ''REMAINING PORTION OF 2014 AND''; and

(ii) by striking ''the period beginning on April 1, 2014, and ending on December 31, 2014, and for''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(16) UPDATE FOR JANUARY THROUGH MARCH OF 2015.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (7)(B), (8)(B), (9)(B), (10)(B), (11)(B), (12)(B), (13)(B), (14)(B), and (15)(B), in lieu of the update to the single conversion factor established in paragraph (1)(C) that would otherwise apply for 2015 for the period beginning on January 1, 2015, and ending on March 31, 2015, the update to the single conversion factor shall be 0.0 percent.

''(B) NO EFFECT ON COMPUTATION OF CONVERSION FACTOR FOR REMAINING PORTION OF 2015 AND SUBSEQUENT YEARS.—The conversion factor under this subsection shall be computed under paragraph (1)(A) for the period beginning on April 1, 2015, and ending on December 31, 2015, and for 2016 and subsequent years as if subparagraph (A) had never applied.''.

SEC. 102. EXTENSION OF WORK GPCI FLOOR.

Section 1848(e)(1)(E) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(e)(1)(E)) is amended by striking ''April 1, 2014'' and inserting ''April 1, 2015''.

SEC. 103. EXTENSION OF THERAPY CAP EXCEPTIONS PROCESS.

Section 1833(g) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5)(A), in the first sentence, by striking ''March 31, 2014'' and inserting ''March 31, 2015''; and

(2) in paragraph (6)(A)—

(A) by striking ''March 31, 2014'' and inserting ''March 31, 2015''; and

(B) by striking ''2012, 2013, or the first three months of 2014'' and inserting ''2012, 2013, 2014, or the first three months of 2015''.

SEC. 104. EXTENSION OF AMBULANCE ADD-ONS.

(a) GROUND AMBULANCE.—Section 1834(l)(13)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(l)(13)(A)) is amended by striking ''April 1, 2014'' and inserting ''April 1, 2015'' each place it appears.

(b) SUPER RURAL GROUND AMBULANCE.—Section 1834(l)(12)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(l)(12)(A)) is amended, in the first sentence, by striking ''April 1, 2014'' and inserting ''April 1, 2015''.

SEC. 105. EXTENSION OF INCREASED INPATIENT HOSPITAL PAYMENT ADJUSTMENT FOR CERTAIN LOW-VOLUME HOSPITALS.

Section 1886(d)(12) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(12)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''in the portion of fiscal year 2014 beginning on April 1, 2014, fiscal year 2015, and subsequent fiscal years'' and inserting ''in fiscal year 2015 (beginning on April 1, 2015), fiscal year 2016, and subsequent fiscal years'';

(2) in subparagraph (C)(i), by striking ''fiscal years 2011, 2012, and 2013, and the portion of fiscal year 2014 before'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and fiscal year 2015 (before April 1, 2015),'' each place it appears; and

(3) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''fiscal years 2011, 2012, and 2013, and the portion of fiscal year 2014 before April 1, 2014,'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and fiscal year 2015 (before April 1, 2015),''.

SEC. 106. EXTENSION OF THE MEDICARE-DEPENDENT HOSPITAL (MDH) PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1886(d)(5)(G) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(5)(G)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking ''April 1, 2014'' and inserting ''April 1, 2015''; and

(2) in clause (ii)(II), by striking ''April 1, 2014'' and inserting ''April 1, 2015''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) EXTENSION OF TARGET AMOUNT.—Section 1886(b)(3)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(b)(3)(D)) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''April 1, 2014'' and inserting ''April 1, 2015''; and

(B) in clause (iv), by striking ''through fiscal year 2013 and the portion of fiscal year 2014 before April 1, 2014'' and inserting ''through fiscal year 2014 and the portion of fiscal year 2015 before April 1, 2015''.

(2) PERMITTING HOSPITALS TO DECLINE RECLASSIFICATION.—Section 13501(e)(2) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1395ww note) is amended by striking ''through the first 2 quarters of fiscal year 2014'' and inserting ''through the first 2 quarters of fiscal year 2015''.

SEC. 107. EXTENSION FOR SPECIALIZED MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS INDIVIDUALS.

Section 1859(f)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–28(f)(1)) is amended by striking ''2016'' and inserting ''2017''.

SEC. 108. EXTENSION OF MEDICARE REASONABLE COST CONTRACTS.

Section 1876(h)(5)(C)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395mm(h)(5)(C)(ii)) is amended, in the matter preceding subclause (I), by striking ''January 1, 2015'' and inserting ''January 1, 2016''.

SEC. 109. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR QUALITY MEASURE ENDORSEMENT, INPUT, AND SELECTION.

Section 1890(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395aaa(d)) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''For purposes''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) For purposes of carrying out this section and section 1890A (other than subsections (e) and (f)), the Secretary shall provide for the transfer, from the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund under section 1817 and the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841, in such proportion as the Secretary determines appropriate, to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account of $5,000,000 for fiscal year 2014 and $15,000,000 for the first 6 months of fiscal year 2015. Amounts transferred under the preceding sentence shall remain available until expended.''.

SEC. 110. EXTENSION OF FUNDING OUTREACH AND ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME PROGRAMS.

(a) ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR STATE HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAMS.—Subsection (a)(1)(B) of section 119 of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (42 U.S.C. 1395b–3 note), as amended by section 3306 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act Public Law 111–148), section 610 of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240), and section 1110 of the Pathway for SGR Reform Act of 2013 (Public Law 113–67), is amended—

(1) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) by striking clause (iv); and

(3) by adding at the end the following new clauses:

''(iv) for fiscal year 2014, of $7,500,000; and

''(v) for the portion of fiscal year 2015 before April 1, 2015, of $3,750,000.''.

(b) ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR AREA AGENCIES ON AGING.—Subsection (b)(1)(B) of such section 119, as so amended, is amended—

(1) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) by striking clause (iv); and

(3) by inserting after clause (iii) the following new clauses:

''(iv) for fiscal year 2014, of $7,500,000; and

''(v) for the portion of fiscal year 2015 before April 1, 2015, of $3,750,000.''.

(c) ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTERS.—Subsection (c)(1)(B) of such section 119, as so amended, is amended—

(1) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) by striking clause (iv); and

(3) by inserting after clause (iii) the following new clauses:

''(iv) for fiscal year 2014, of $5,000,000; and

''(v) for the portion of fiscal year 2015 before April 1, 2015, of $2,500,000.''.

(d) ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR CONTRACT WITH THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR BENEFITS AND OUTREACH ENROLLMENT.—Subsection (d)(2) of such section 119, as so amended, is amended—

(1) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) by striking clause (iv); and

(3) by inserting after clause (iii) the following new clauses:

''(iv) for fiscal year 2014, of $5,000,000; and

''(v) for the portion of fiscal year 2015 before April 1, 2015, of $2,500,000.''.

SEC. 111. EXTENSION OF TWO-MIDNIGHT RULE.

(a) CONTINUATION OF CERTAIN MEDICAL REVIEW ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services may continue medical review activities described in the notice entitled ''Selecting Hospital Claims for Patient Status Reviews: Admissions On or After October 1, 2013'', posted on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, through the first 6 months of fiscal year 2015 for such additional hospital claims as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(b) LIMITATION.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall not conduct patient status reviews (as described in such notice) on a post-payment review basis through recovery audit contractors under section 1893(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ddd(h)) for inpatient claims with dates of admission October 1, 2013, through March 31, 2015, unless there is evidence of systematic gaming, fraud, abuse, or delays in the provision of care by a provider of services (as defined in section 1861(u) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(u))).

SEC. 112. TECHNICAL CHANGES TO MEDICARE LTCH AMENDMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subclauses (I) and (II) of section 1886(m)(6)(C)(iv) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(m)(6)(C)(iv)) are each amended by striking ''discharges'' and inserting ''Medicare fee-for-service discharges''.

(b) MMSEA CORRECTION.—Section 114(d) of the Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 1395ww note), as amended by sections 3106(b) and 10312(b) of Public Law 111–148 and by section 1206(b)(2) of the Pathway for SGR Reform Act of 2013 (division B of Public Law 113–67), is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''January 1, 2015,'' and inserting ''on the date of the enactment of paragraph (7) of this subsection'';

(2) in paragraph (6), by striking ''January 1, 2015,'' and inserting ''on the date of the enactment of paragraph (7) of this subsection''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(7) ADDITIONAL EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN LONG-TERM CARE HOSPITALS.—The moratorium under paragraph (1)(A) shall not apply to a long-term care hospital that—

''(A) began its qualifying period for payment as a long-term care hospital under section 412.23(e) of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, on or before the date of enactment of this paragraph;

''(B) has a binding written agreement as of the date of the enactment of this paragraph with an outside, unrelated party for the actual construction, renovation, lease, or demolition for a long-term care hospital, and has expended, before such date of enactment, at least 10 percent of the estimated cost of the project (or, if less, $2,500,000); or

''(C) has obtained an approved certificate of need in a State where one is required on or before such date of enactment.''.

(c) ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS.—Section 1206(a) of the Pathway for SGR Reform Act of 2013 (division B of Public Law 113–67) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking ''Assessment'' and inserting ''Advisory''; and

(2) in paragraph (3)(B), by striking ''shall not apply to a hospital that is classified as of December 10, 2013, as a subsection (d) hospital (as defined in section 1886(d)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(1)(B))'' and inserting ''shall only apply to a hospital that is classified as of December 10, 2013, as a long-term care hospital (as defined in section 1861(ccc) of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 1395x(ccc))''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section are effective as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE II—OTHER HEALTH PROVISIONS

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF THE QUALIFYING INDIVIDUAL (QI) PROGRAM.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 1902(a)(10)(E)(iv) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(10)(E)(iv)) is amended by striking ''March 2014'' and inserting ''March 2015''.

(b) EXTENDING TOTAL AMOUNT AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION.—Section 1933(g) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396u–3(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (T), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (U)—

(i) by striking ''March 31, 2014'' and inserting ''September 30, 2014''; and

(ii) by striking ''$200,000,000.'' and inserting ''$485,000,000;''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(V) for the period that begins on October 1, 2014, and ends on December 31, 2014, the total allocation amount is $300,000,000; and

''(W) for the period that begins on January 1, 2015, and ends on March 31, 2015, the total allocation amount is $250,000,000.''; and

(2) in paragraph (3), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''or (T)'' and inserting ''(T), or (V)''.

SEC. 202. TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF TRANSITIONAL MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (TMA).

Sections 1902(e)(1)(B) and 1925(f) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(e)(1)(B), 1396r–6(f)) are each amended by striking ''March 31, 2014'' and inserting ''March 31, 2015''.

SEC. 203. EXTENSION OF MEDICAID AND CHIP EXPRESS LANE OPTION.

Section 1902(e)(13)(I) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(e)(13)(I)) is amended by striking ''September 30, 2014'' and inserting ''September 30, 2015''.

SEC. 204. EXTENSION OF SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAM FOR TYPE I DIABETES AND FOR INDIANS.

(a) SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAMS FOR TYPE I DIABETES.—Section 330B(b)(2)(C) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c–2(b)(2)(C)) is amended by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2015''.

(b) SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS.—Section 330C(c)(2)(C) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c–3(c)(2)(C)) is amended by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2015''.

SEC. 205. EXTENSION OF ABSTINENCE EDUCATION.

Subsections (a) and (d) of section 510 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 710) are each amended by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2015''.

SEC. 206. EXTENSION OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY EDUCATION PROGRAM (PREP).

Section 513 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 713) is amended—

(1) in paragraphs (1)(A) and (4)(A) of subsection (a), by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2015'' each place it appears;

(2) in subsection (a)(4)(B)(i), by striking ''and 2014'' and inserting ''2014, and 2015''; and

(3) in subsection (f), by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2015''.

SEC. 207. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR FAMILY-TO-FAMILY HEALTH INFORMATION CENTERS.

Section 501(c)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 701(c)(1)(A)) is amended—

(1) in clause (iii), by striking at the end ''and'';

(2) in clause (iv), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon and by moving the margin to align with the margin for clause (iii); and

(3) by adding at the end the following new clauses:

''(v) $2,500,000 for the portion of fiscal year 2014 on or after April 1, 2014; and

''(vi) $2,500,000 for the portion of fiscal year 2015 before April 1, 2015.''.

SEC. 208. EXTENSION OF HEALTH WORKFORCE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS.

Section 2008(c)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397g(c)(1)) is amended by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2015''.

SEC. 209. EXTENSION OF MATERNAL, INFANT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING PROGRAMS.

Section 511(j) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 711(j)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (D);

(B) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (E) and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(F) for the period beginning on October 1, 2014, and ending on March 31, 2015, an amount equal to the amount provided in subparagraph (E).''; and

(2) in paragraphs (2) and (3), by inserting ''(or portion of a fiscal year)'' after ''for a fiscal year'' each place it appears.

SEC. 210. PEDIATRIC QUALITY MEASURES.

(a) CONTINUATION OF FUNDING FOR PEDIATRIC QUALITY MEASURES FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE.—Section 1139B(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b–9b(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following: ''Of the funds appropriated under this subsection, not less than $15,000,000 shall be used to carry out section 1139A(b).''.

(b) ELIMINATION OF RESTRICTION ON MEDICAID QUALITY MEASUREMENT PROGRAM.—Section 1139B(b)(5)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b–9b(b)(5)(A)) is amended by striking ''The aggregate amount awarded by the Secretary for grants and contracts for the development, testing, and validation of emerging and innovative evidence-based measures under such program shall equal the aggregate amount awarded by the Secretary for grants under section 1139A(b)(4)(A)''.

SEC. 211. DELAY OF EFFECTIVE DATE FOR MEDICAID AMENDMENTS RELATING TO BENEFICIARY LIABILITY SETTLEMENTS.

Effective as if included in the enactment of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (Public Law 113–67), section 202(c) of such Act is amended by striking ''October 1, 2014'' and inserting ''October 1, 2016''.

SEC. 212. DELAY IN TRANSITION FROM ICD–9 TO ICD–10 CODE SETS.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services may not, prior to October 1, 2015, adopt ICD–10 code sets as the standard for code sets under section 1173(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320d–2(c)) and section 162.1002 of title 45, Code of Federal Regulations.

SEC. 213. ELIMINATION OF LIMITATION ON DEDUCTIBLES FOR EMPLOYER-SPONSORED HEALTH PLANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1302(c) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148; 42 U.S.C. 18022(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (2); and

(2) in paragraph (4)(A), by striking ''paragraphs (1)(B)(i) and (2)(B)(i)'' and inserting ''paragraph (1)(B)(i)''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 2707(b) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300gg–6(b)) is amended by striking ''paragraphs (1) and (2)'' and inserting ''paragraph (1)''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this Act shall be effective as if included in the enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148).

SEC. 214. GAO REPORT ON THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In the case that the Children's Hospital GME Support Reauthorization Act of 2013 is enacted into law, the Comptroller General of the United States shall, not later than November 30, 2017, conduct an independent evaluation, and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report, concerning the implementation of section 340E(h) of the Public Health Service Act, as added by section 3 of the Children's Hospital GME Support Reauthorization Act of 2013.

(b) CONTENT.—The report described in subsection (a) shall review and assess each of the following, with respect to hospitals receiving payments under such section 340E(h) during the period of fiscal years 2015 through 2017:

(1) The number and type of such hospitals that applied for such payments.

(2) The number and type of such hospitals receiving such payments.

(3) The amount of such payments awarded to such hospitals.

(4) How such hospitals used such payments.

(5) The impact of such payments on—

(A) the number of pediatric providers; and

(B) health care needs of children.

SEC. 215. SKILLED NURSING FACILITY VALUE-BASED PURCHASING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1888 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395yy) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(g) SKILLED NURSING FACILITY READMISSION MEASURE.—

''(1) READMISSION MEASURE.—Not later than October 1, 2015, the Secretary shall specify a skilled nursing facility all-cause all-condition hospital readmission measure (or any successor to such a measure).

''(2) RESOURCE USE MEASURE.—Not later than October 1, 2016, the Secretary shall specify a measure to reflect an all-condition risk-adjusted potentially preventable hospital readmission rate for skilled nursing facilities.

''(3) MEASURE ADJUSTMENTS.—When specifying the measures under paragraphs (1) and (2), the Secretary shall devise a methodology to achieve a high level of reliability and validity, especially for skilled nursing facilities with a low volume of readmissions.

''(4) PRE-RULEMAKING PROCESS (MEASURE APPLICATION PARTNERSHIP PROCESS).—The application of the provisions of section 1890A shall be optional in the case of a measure specified under paragraph (1) and a measure specified under paragraph (2).

''(5) FEEDBACK REPORTS TO SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES.—Beginning October 1, 2016, and every quarter thereafter, the Secretary shall provide confidential feedback reports to skilled nursing facilities on the performance of such facilities with respect to a measure specified under paragraph (1) or (2).

''(6) PUBLIC REPORTING OF SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C), the Secretary shall establish procedures for making available to the public by posting on the Nursing Home Compare Medicare website (or a successor website) described in section 1819(i) information on the performance of skilled nursing facilities with respect to a measure specified under paragraph (1) and a measure specified under paragraph (2).

''(B) OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW.—The procedures under subparagraph (A) shall ensure that a skilled nursing facility has the opportunity to review and submit corrections to the information that is to be made public with respect to the facility prior to such information being made public.

''(C) TIMING.—Such procedures shall provide that the information described in subparagraph (A) is made publicly available beginning not later than October 1, 2017.

''(7) NON-APPLICATION OF PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT.—Chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code (commonly referred to as the 'Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995') shall not apply to this subsection.''.

(b) VALUE-BASED PURCHASING PROGRAM FOR SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES.—Section 1888 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395yy), as amended by subsection (a), is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h) SKILLED NURSING FACILITY VALUE-BASED PURCHASING PROGRAM.—

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the succeeding provisions of this subsection, the Secretary shall establish a skilled nursing facility value-based purchasing program (in this subsection referred to as the 'SNF VBP Program') under which value-based incentive payments are made in a fiscal year to skilled nursing facilities.

''(B) PROGRAM TO BEGIN IN FISCAL YEAR 2019.—The SNF VBP Program shall apply to payments for services furnished on or after October 1, 2018.

''(2) APPLICATION OF MEASURES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall apply the measure specified under subsection (g)(1) for purposes of the SNF VBP Program.

''(B) REPLACEMENT.—For purposes of the SNF VBP Program, the Secretary shall apply the measure specified under (g)(2) instead of the measure specified under (g)(1) as soon as practicable.

''(3) PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.—

''(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish performance standards with respect to the measure applied under paragraph (2) for a performance period for a fiscal year.

''(B) HIGHER OF ACHIEVEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT.—The performance standards established under subparagraph (A) shall include levels of achievement and improvement. In calculating the SNF performance score under paragraph (4), the Secretary shall use the higher of either improvement or achievement.

''(C) TIMING.—The Secretary shall establish and announce the performance standards established under subparagraph (A) not later than 60 days prior to the beginning of the performance period for the fiscal year involved.

''(4) SNF PERFORMANCE SCORE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop a methodology for assessing the total performance of each skilled nursing facility based on performance standards established under paragraph (3) with respect to the measure applied under paragraph (2). Using such methodology, the Secretary shall provide for an assessment (in this subsection referred to as the 'SNF performance score') for each skilled nursing facility for each such performance period.

''(B) RANKING OF SNF PERFORMANCE SCORES.—The Secretary shall, for the performance period for each fiscal year, rank the SNF performance scores determined under subparagraph (A) from low to high.

''(5) CALCULATION OF VALUE-BASED INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to a skilled nursing facility, based on the ranking under paragraph (4)(B) for a performance period for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall increase the adjusted Federal per diem rate determined under subsection (e)(4)(G) otherwise applicable to such skilled nursing facility (and after application of paragraph (6)) for services furnished by such facility during such fiscal year by the value-based incentive payment amount under subparagraph (B).

''(B) VALUE-BASED INCENTIVE PAYMENT AMOUNT.—The value-based incentive payment amount for services furnished by a skilled nursing facility in a fiscal year shall be equal to the product of—

''(i) the adjusted Federal per diem rate determined under subsection (e)(4)(G) otherwise applicable to such skilled nursing facility for such services furnished by the skilled nursing facility during such fiscal year; and

''(ii) the value-based incentive payment percentage specified under subparagraph (C) for the skilled nursing facility for such fiscal year.

''(C) VALUE-BASED INCENTIVE PAYMENT PERCENTAGE.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall specify a value-based incentive payment percentage for a skilled nursing facility for a fiscal year which may include a zero percentage.

''(ii) REQUIREMENTS.—In specifying the value-based incentive payment percentage for each skilled nursing facility for a fiscal year under clause (i), the Secretary shall ensure that—

''(I) such percentage is based on the SNF performance score of the skilled nursing facility provided under paragraph (4) for the performance period for such fiscal year;

''(II) the application of all such percentages in such fiscal year results in an appropriate distribution of value-based incentive payments under subparagraph (B) such that—

''(aa) skilled nursing facilities with the highest rankings under paragraph (4)(B) receive the highest value-based incentive payment amounts under subparagraph (B);

''(bb) skilled nursing facilities with the lowest rankings under paragraph (4)(B) receive the lowest value-based incentive payment amounts under subparagraph (B); and

''(cc) in the case of skilled nursing facilities in the lowest 40 percent of the ranking under paragraph (4)(B), the payment rate under subparagraph (A) for services furnished by such facility during such fiscal year shall be less than the payment rate for such services for such fiscal year that would otherwise apply under subsection (e)(4)(G) without application of this subsection; and

''(III) the total amount of value-based incentive payments under this paragraph for all skilled nursing facilities in such fiscal year shall be greater than or equal to 50 percent, but not greater than 70 percent, of the total amount of the reductions to payments for such fiscal year under paragraph (6), as estimated by the Secretary.

''(6) FUNDING FOR VALUE-BASED INCENTIVE PAYMENTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall reduce the adjusted Federal per diem rate determined under subsection (e)(4)(G) otherwise applicable to a skilled nursing facility for services furnished by such facility during

a fiscal year (beginning with fiscal year 2019) by the applicable percent (as defined in subparagraph (B)). The Secretary shall make such reductions for all skilled nursing facilities in the fiscal year involved, regardless of whether or not the skilled nursing facility has been determined by the Secretary to have earned a value-based incentive payment under paragraph (5) for such fiscal year.

''(B) APPLICABLE PERCENT.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'applicable percent' means, with respect to fiscal year 2019 and succeeding fiscal years, 2 percent.

''(7) ANNOUNCEMENT OF NET RESULT OF ADJUSTMENTS.—Under the SNF VBP Program, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days prior to the fiscal year involved, inform each skilled nursing facility of the adjustments to payments to the skilled nursing facility for services furnished by such facility during the fiscal year under paragraphs (5) and (6).

''(8) NO EFFECT IN SUBSEQUENT FISCAL YEARS.—The value-based incentive payment under paragraph (5) and the payment reduction under paragraph (6) shall each apply only with respect to the fiscal year involved, and the Secretary shall not take into account such value-based incentive payment or payment reduction in making payments to a skilled nursing facility under this section in a subsequent fiscal year.

''(9) PUBLIC REPORTING.—

''(A) SNF SPECIFIC INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall make available to the public, by posting on the Nursing Home Compare Medicare website (or a successor website) described in section 1819(i) in an easily understandable format, information regarding the performance of individual skilled nursing facilities under the SNF VBP Program, with respect to a fiscal year, including—

''(i) the SNF performance score of the skilled nursing facility for such fiscal year; and

''(ii) the ranking of the skilled nursing facility under paragraph (4)(B) for the performance period for such fiscal year.

''(B) AGGREGATE INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall periodically post on the Nursing Home Compare Medicare website (or a successor website) described in section 1819(i) aggregate information on the SNF VBP Program, including—

''(i) the range of SNF performance scores provided under paragraph (4)(A); and

''(ii) the number of skilled nursing facilities receiving value-based incentive payments under paragraph (5) and the range and total amount of such value-based incentive payments.

''(10) LIMITATION ON REVIEW.—There shall be no administrative or judicial review under section 1869, section 1878, or otherwise of the following:

''(A) The methodology used to determine the value-based incentive payment percentage and the amount of the value-based incentive payment under paragraph (5).

''(B) The determination of the amount of funding available for such value-based incentive payments under paragraph (5)(C)(ii)(III) and the payment reduction under paragraph (6).

''(C) The establishment of the performance standards under paragraph (3) and the performance period.

''(D) The methodology developed under paragraph (4) that is used to calculate SNF performance scores and the calculation of such scores.

''(E) The ranking determinations under paragraph (4)(B).

''(11) FUNDING FOR PROGRAM MANAGEMENT.—The Secretary shall provide for the one time transfer from the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund established under section 1817 to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account of—

''(A) for purposes of subsection (g)(2), $2,000,000; and

''(B) for purposes of implementing this subsection, $10,000,000.

Such funds shall remain available until expended.''.

(c) MEDPAC STUDY.—Not later than June 30, 2021, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission shall submit to Congress a report that reviews the progress of the skilled nursing facility value-based purchasing program established under section 1888(h) of the Social Security Act, as added by subsection (b), and makes recommendations, as appropriate, on any improvements that should be made to such program. For purposes of the previous sentence, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission shall consider any unintended consequences with respect to such skilled nursing facility value-based purchasing program and any potential adjustments to the readmission measure specified under section 1888(g)(1) of such Act, as added by subsection (a), for purposes of determining the effect of the socio-economic status of a beneficiary under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act for the SNF performance score of a skilled nursing facility provided under section 1888(h)(4) of such Act, as added by subsection (b).

SEC. 216. IMPROVING MEDICARE POLICIES FOR CLINICAL DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY TESTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title XVIII of the Social Security Act is amended by inserting after section 1834 (42 U.S.C. 1395m) the following new section:

''SEC. 1834A. IMPROVING POLICIES FOR CLINICAL DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY TESTS.

''(a) REPORTING OF PRIVATE SECTOR PAYMENT RATES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF MEDICARE PAYMENT RATES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning January 1, 2016, and every 3 years thereafter (or, annually, in the case of reporting with respect to an advanced diagnostic laboratory test, as defined in subsection (d)(5)), an applicable laboratory (as defined in paragraph (2)) shall report to the Secretary, at a time specified by the Secretary, applicable information (as defined in paragraph (3)) for a data collection period (as defined in paragraph (4)) for each clinical diagnostic laboratory test that the laboratory furnishes during such period for which payment is made under this part.

''(2) DEFINITION OF APPLICABLE LABORATORY.—In this section, the term 'applicable laboratory' means a laboratory that, with respect to its revenues under this title, a majority of such revenues are from this section, section 1833(h), or section 1848. The Secretary may establish a low volume or low expenditure threshold for excluding a laboratory from the definition of applicable laboratory under this paragraph, as the Secretary determines appropriate.

''(3) APPLICABLE INFORMATION DEFINED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In this section, subject to subparagraph (B), the term 'applicable information' means, with respect to a laboratory test for a data collection period, the following:

''(i) The payment rate (as determined in accordance with paragraph (5)) that was paid by each private payor for the test during the period.

''(ii) The volume of such tests for each such payor for the period.

''(B) EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS.—Such term shall not include information with respect to a laboratory test for which payment is made on a capitated basis or other similar payment basis during the data collection period.

''(4) DATA COLLECTION PERIOD DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'data collection period' means a period of time, such as a previous 12 month period, specified by the Secretary.

''(5) TREATMENT OF DISCOUNTS.—The payment rate reported by a laboratory under this subsection shall reflect all discounts, rebates, coupons, and other price concessions, including those described in section 1847A(c)(3).

''(6) ENSURING COMPLETE REPORTING.—In the case where an applicable laboratory has more than one payment rate for the same payor for the same test or more than one payment rate for different payors for the same test, the applicable laboratory shall report each such payment rate and the volume for the test at each such rate under this subsection. Beginning with January 1, 2019, the Secretary may establish rules to aggregate reporting with respect to the situations described in the preceding sentence.

''(7) CERTIFICATION.—An officer of the laboratory shall certify the accuracy and completeness of the information reported under this subsection.

''(8) PRIVATE PAYOR DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'private payor' means the following:

''(A) A health insurance issuer and a group health plan (as such terms are defined in section 2791 of the Public Health Service Act).

''(B) A Medicare Advantage plan under part C.

''(C) A medicaid managed care organization (as defined in section 1903(m)).

''(9) CIVIL MONEY PENALTY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary determines that an applicable laboratory has failed to report or made a misrepresentation or omission in reporting information under this subsection with respect to a clinical diagnostic laboratory test, the Secretary may apply a civil money penalty in an amount of up to $10,000 per day for each failure to report or each such misrepresentation or omission.

''(B) APPLICATION.—The provisions of section 1128A (other than subsections (a) and (b)) shall apply to a civil money penalty under this paragraph in the same manner as they apply to a civil money penalty or proceeding under section 1128A(a).

''(10) CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, information disclosed by a laboratory under this subsection is confidential and shall not be disclosed by the Secretary or a Medicare contractor in a form that discloses the identity of a specific payor or laboratory, or prices charged or payments made to any such laboratory, except—

''(A) as the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out this section;

''(B) to permit the Comptroller General to review the information provided;

''(C) to permit the Director of the Congressional Budget Office to review the information provided; and

''(D) to permit the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission to review the information provided.

''(11) PROTECTION FROM PUBLIC DISCLOSURE.—A payor shall not be identified on information reported under this subsection. The name of an applicable laboratory under this subsection shall be exempt from disclosure under section 552(b)(3) of title 5, United States Code.

''(12) REGULATIONS.—Not later than June 30, 2015, the Secretary shall establish through notice and comment rulemaking parameters for data collection under this subsection.

''(b) PAYMENT FOR CLINICAL DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY TESTS.—

''(1) USE OF PRIVATE PAYOR RATE INFORMATION TO DETERMINE MEDICARE PAYMENT RATES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (3) and subsections (c) and (d), in the case of a clinical diagnostic laboratory test furnished on or after January 1, 2017, the payment amount under this section shall be equal to the weighted median determined for the test under paragraph (2) for the most recent data collection period.

''(B) APPLICATION OF PAYMENT AMOUNTS TO HOSPITAL LABORATORIES.—The payment amounts established under this section shall apply to a clinical diagnostic laboratory test furnished by a hospital laboratory if such test is paid for separately, and not as part of a bundled payment under section 1833(t).

''(2) CALCULATION OF WEIGHTED MEDIAN.—For each laboratory test with respect to which information is reported under subsection (a) for a data collection period, the Secretary shall calculate a weighted median for the test for the period, by arraying the distribution of all payment rates reported for the period for each test weighted by volume for each payor and each laboratory.

''(3) PHASE-IN OF REDUCTIONS FROM PRIVATE PAYOR RATE IMPLEMENTATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Payment amounts determined under this subsection for a clinical diagnostic laboratory test for each of 2017 through 2022 shall not result in a reduction in payments for a clinical diagnostic laboratory test for the year of greater than the applicable percent (as defined in subparagraph (B)) of the amount of payment for the test for the preceding year.

''(B) APPLICABLE PERCENT DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term 'applicable percent' means—

''(i) for each of 2017 through 2019, 10 percent; and

''(ii) for each of 2020 through 2022, 15 percent.

''(C) NO APPLICATION TO NEW TESTS.—This paragraph shall not apply to payment amounts determined under this section for either of the following.

''(i) A new test under subsection (c).

''(ii) A new advanced diagnostic test (as defined in subsection (d)(5)) under subsection (d).

''(4) APPLICATION OF MARKET RATES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (3), once established for a year following a data collection period, the payment amounts under this subsection shall continue to apply until the year following the next data collection period.

''(B) OTHER ADJUSTMENTS NOT APPLICABLE.—The payment amounts under this section shall not be subject to any adjustment (including any geographic adjustment, budget neutrality adjustment, annual update, or other adjustment).

''(5) SAMPLE COLLECTION FEE.—In the case of a sample collected from an individual in a skilled nursing facility or by a laboratory on behalf of a home health agency, the nominal fee that would otherwise apply under section 1833(h)(3)(A) shall be increased by $2.

''(c) PAYMENT FOR NEW TESTS THAT ARE NOT ADVANCED DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY TESTS.—

''(1) PAYMENT DURING INITIAL PERIOD.—In the case of a clinical diagnostic laboratory test that is assigned a new or substantially revised HCPCS code on or after the date of enactment of this section, and which is not an advanced diagnostic laboratory test (as defined in subsection (d)(5)), during an initial period until payment rates under subsection (b) are established for the test, payment for the test shall be determined—

''(A) using cross-walking (as described in section 414.508(a) of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor regulation) to the most appropriate existing test under the fee schedule under this section during that period; or

''(B) if no existing test is comparable to the new test, according to the gapfilling process described in paragraph (2).

''(2) GAPFILLING PROCESS DESCRIBED.—The gapfilling process described in this paragraph shall take into account the following sources of information to determine gapfill amounts, if available:

''(A) Charges for the test and routine discounts to charges.

''(B) Resources required to perform the test.

''(C) Payment amounts determined by other payors.

''(D) Charges, payment amounts, and resources required for other tests that may be comparable or otherwise relevant.

''(E) Other criteria the Secretary determines appropriate.

''(3) ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION.—In determining the payment amount under crosswalking or gapfilling processes under this subsection, the Secretary shall consider recommendations from the panel established under subsection (f)(1).

''(4) EXPLANATION OF PAYMENT RATES.—In the case of a clinical diagnostic laboratory test for which payment is made under this subsection, the Secretary shall make available to the public an explanation of the payment rate for the test, including an explanation of how the criteria described in paragraph (2) and paragraph (3) are applied.

''(d) PAYMENT FOR NEW ADVANCED DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY TESTS.—

''(1) PAYMENT DURING INITIAL PERIOD.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an advanced diagnostic laboratory test for which payment has not been made under the fee schedule under section 1833(h) prior to the date of enactment of this section, during an initial period of three quarters, the payment amount for the test for such period shall be based on the actual list charge for the laboratory test.

''(B) ACTUAL LIST CHARGE.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'actual list charge', with respect to a laboratory test furnished during such period, means the publicly available rate on the first day at which the test is available for purchase by a private payor.

''(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR TIMING OF INITIAL REPORTING.—With respect to an advanced diagnostic laboratory test described in paragraph (1)(A), an applicable laboratory shall initially be required to report under subsection (a) not later than the last day of the second quarter of the initial period under such paragraph.

''(3) APPLICATION OF MARKET RATES AFTER INITIAL PERIOD.—Subject to paragraph (4), data reported under paragraph (2) shall be used to establish the payment amount for an advanced diagnostic laboratory test after the initial period under paragraph (1)(A) using the methodology described in subsection (b). Such payment amount shall continue to apply until the year following the next data collection period.

''(4) RECOUPMENT IF ACTUAL LIST CHARGE EXCEEDS MARKET RATE.—With respect to the initial period described in paragraph (1)(A), if, after such period, the Secretary determines that the payment amount for an advanced diagnostic laboratory test under paragraph (1)(A) that was applicable during the period was greater than 130 percent of the payment amount for the test established using the methodology described in subsection (b) that is applicable after such period, the Secretary shall recoup the difference between such payment amounts for tests furnished during such period.

''(5) ADVANCED DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY TEST DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'advanced diagnostic laboratory test' means a clinical diagnostic laboratory test covered under this part that is offered and furnished only by a single laboratory and not sold for use by a laboratory other than the original developing laboratory (or a successor owner) and meets one of the following criteria:

''(A) The test is an analysis of multiple biomarkers of DNA, RNA, or proteins combined with a unique algorithm to yield a single patient-specific result.

''(B) The test is cleared or approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

''(C) The test meets other similar criteria established by the Secretary.

''(e) CODING.—

''(1) TEMPORARY CODES FOR CERTAIN NEW TESTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall adopt temporary HCPCS codes to identify new advanced diagnostic laboratory tests (as defined in subsection (d)(5)) and new laboratory tests that are cleared or approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

''(B) DURATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), the temporary code shall be effective until a permanent HCPCS code is established (but not to exceed 2 years).

''(ii) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may extend the temporary code or establish a permanent HCPCS code, as the Secretary determines appropriate.

''(2) EXISTING TESTS.—Not later than January 1, 2016, for each existing advanced diagnostic laboratory test (as so defined) and each existing clinical diagnostic laboratory test that is cleared or approved by the Food and Drug Administration for which payment is made under this part as of the date of enactment of this section, if such test has not already been assigned a unique HCPCS code, the Secretary shall—

''(A) assign a unique HCPCS code for the test; and

''(B) publicly report the payment rate for the test.

''(3) ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIQUE IDENTIFIER FOR CERTAIN TESTS.—For purposes of tracking and monitoring, if a laboratory or a manufacturer requests a unique identifier for an advanced diagnostic laboratory test (as so defined) or a laboratory test that is cleared or approved by the Food and Drug Administration, the Secretary shall utilize a means to uniquely track such test through a mechanism such as a HCPCS code or modifier.

''(f) INPUT FROM CLINICIANS AND TECHNICAL EXPERTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall consult with an expert outside advisory panel, established by the Secretary not later than July 1, 2015, composed of an appropriate selection of individuals with expertise, which may include molecular pathologists, researchers, and individuals with expertise in laboratory science or health economics, in issues related to clinical diagnostic laboratory tests, which may include the development, validation, performance, and application of such tests, to provide—

''(A) input on—

''(i) the establishment of payment rates under this section for new clinical diagnostic laboratory tests, including whether to use crosswalking or gapfilling processes to determine payment for a specific new test; and

''(ii) the factors used in determining coverage and payment processes for new clinical diagnostic laboratory tests; and

''(B) recommendations to the Secretary under this section.

''(2) COMPLIANCE WITH FACA.—The panel shall be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

''(3) CONTINUATION OF ANNUAL MEETING.—The Secretary shall continue to convene the annual meeting described in section 1833(h)(8)(B)(iii) after the implementation of

this section for purposes of receiving comments and recommendations (and data on which the recommendations are based) as described in such section on the establishment of payment amounts under this section.

''(g) COVERAGE.—

''(1) ISSUANCE OF COVERAGE POLICIES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A medicare administrative contractor shall only issue a coverage policy with respect to a clinical diagnostic laboratory test in accordance with the process for making a local coverage determination (as defined in section 1869(f)(2)(B)), including the appeals and review process for local coverage determinations under part 426 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations).

''(B) NO EFFECT ON NATIONAL COVERAGE DETERMINATION PROCESS.—This paragraph shall not apply to the national coverage determination process (as defined in section 1869(f)(1)(B)).

''(C) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This paragraph shall apply to coverage policies issued on or after January 1, 2015.

''(2) DESIGNATION OF ONE OR MORE MEDICARE ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACTORS FOR CLINICAL DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY TESTS.—The Secretary may designate one or more (not to exceed 4) medicare administrative contractors to either establish coverage policies or establish coverage policies and process claims for payment for clinical diagnostic laboratory tests, as determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(h) IMPLEMENTATION.—

''(1) IMPLEMENTATION.—There shall be no administrative or judicial review under section 1869, section 1878, or otherwise, of the establishment of payment amounts under this section.

''(2) ADMINISTRATION.—Chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, shall not apply to information collected under this section.

''(3) FUNDING.—For purposes of implementing this section, the Secretary shall provide for the transfer, from the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841, to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account, for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018, $4,000,000, and for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, $3,000,000. Amounts transferred under the preceding sentence shall remain available until expended.

''(i) TRANSITIONAL RULE.—During the period beginning on the date of enactment of this section and ending on December 31, 2016, with respect to advanced diagnostic laboratory tests under this part, the Secretary shall use the methodologies for pricing, coding, and coverage in effect on the day before such date of enactment, which may include cross-walking or gapfilling methods.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 1833(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)(D)—

(i) by striking ''(i) on the basis'' and inserting ''(i)(I) on the basis'';

(ii) in subclause (I), as added by clause (i), by striking ''subsection (h)(1)'' and inserting ''subsection (h)(1) (for tests furnished before January 1, 2017)'';

(iii) by striking ''or (ii)'' and inserting ''or (II) under section 1834A (for tests furnished on or after January 1, 2017), the amount paid shall be equal to 80 percent (or 100 percent, in the case of such tests for which payment is made on an assignment-related basis) of the lesser of the amount determined under such section or the amount of the charges billed for the tests, or (ii)''; and

(iv) in clause (ii), by striking ''on the basis'' and inserting ''for tests furnished before January 1, 2017, on the basis'';

(B) in paragraph (2)(D)—

(i) by striking ''(i) on the basis'' and inserting ''(i)(I) on the basis'';

(ii) in subclause (I), as added by clause (i), by striking ''subsection (h)(1)'' and inserting ''subsection (h)(1) (for tests furnished before January 1, 2017)'';

(iii) by striking ''or (ii)'' and inserting ''or (II) under section 1834A (for tests furnished on or after January 1, 2017), the amount paid shall be equal to 80 percent (or 100 percent, in the case of such tests for which payment is made on an assignment-related basis or to a provider having an agreement under section 1866) of the lesser of the amount determined under such section or the amount of the charges billed for the tests, or (ii)''; and

(iv) in clause (ii), by striking ''on the basis'' and inserting ''for tests furnished before January 1, 2017, on the basis'';

(C) in subsection (b)(3)(B), by striking ''on the basis'' and inserting ''for tests furnished before January 1, 2017, on the basis'';

(D) in subsection (h)(2)(A)(i), by striking ''and subject to'' and inserting ''and, for tests furnished before the date of enactment of section 1834A, subject to'';

(E) in subsection (h)(3), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''fee schedules'' and inserting ''fee schedules (for tests furnished before January 1, 2017) or under section 1834A (for tests furnished on or after January 1, 2017), subject to subsection (b)(5) of such section'';

(F) in subsection (h)(6), by striking ''In the case'' and inserting ''For tests furnished before January 1, 2017, in the case''; and

(G) in subsection (h)(7), in the first sentence—

(i) by striking ''and (4)'' and inserting ''and (4) and section 1834A''; and

(ii) by striking ''under this subsection'' and inserting ''under this part''.

(2) Section 1869(f)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ff(f)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) LOCAL COVERAGE DETERMINATIONS FOR CLINICAL DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY TESTS.—For provisions relating to local coverage determinations for clinical diagnostic laboratory tests, see section 1834A(g).''.

(c) GAO STUDY AND REPORT; MONITORING OF MEDICARE EXPENDITURES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PAYMENT SYSTEM FOR LABORATORY TESTS.—

(1) GAO STUDY AND REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PAYMENT RATES FOR CLINICAL DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY TESTS.—

(A) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States (in this subsection referred to as the ''Comptroller General'') shall conduct a study on the implementation of section 1834A of the Social Security Act, as added by subsection (a). The study shall include an analysis of—

(i) payment rates paid by private payors for laboratory tests furnished in various settings, including—

(I) how such payment rates compare across settings;

(II) the trend in payment rates over time; and

(III) trends by private payors to move to alternative payment methodologies for laboratory tests;

(ii) the conversion to the new payment rate for laboratory tests under such section;

(iii) the impact of such implementation on beneficiary access under title XVIII of the Social Security Act;

(iv) the impact of the new payment system on laboratories that furnish a low volume of services and laboratories that specialize in a small number of tests;

(v) the number of new Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) codes issued for laboratory tests;

(vi) the spending trend for laboratory tests under such title;

(vii) whether the information reported by laboratories and the new payment rates for laboratory tests under such section accurately reflect market prices;

(viii) the initial list price for new laboratory tests and the subsequent reported rates for such tests under such section;

(ix) changes in the number of advanced diagnostic laboratory tests and laboratory tests cleared or approved by the Food and Drug Administration for which payment is made under such section; and

(x) healthcare economic information on downstream cost impacts for such tests and decision making based on accepted methodologies.

(B) REPORT.—Not later than October 1, 2018, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on the study under subparagraph (A), including recommendations for such legislation and administrative action as the Comptroller General determines appropriate.

(2) MONITORING OF MEDICARE EXPENDITURES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PAYMENT SYSTEM FOR LABORATORY TESTS.—The Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services shall—

(A) publicly release an annual analysis of the top 25 laboratory tests by expenditures under title XVIII of the Social Security Act; and

(B) conduct analyses the Inspector General determines appropriate with respect to the implementation and effect of the new payment system for laboratory tests under section 1834A of the Social Security Act, as added by subsection (a).

SEC. 217. REVISIONS UNDER THE MEDICARE ESRD PROSPECTIVE PAYMENT SYSTEM.

(a) DELAY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ORAL-ONLY POLICY.—Section 632(b)(1) of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (42 U.S.C. 1395rr note) is amended—

(1) by striking ''2016'' and inserting ''2024''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''Notwithstanding section 1881(b)(14)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(b)(14)(A)(ii)), implementation of the policy described in the previous sentence shall be based on data from the most recent year available.''.

(b) MITIGATION OF THE APPLICATION OF ADJUSTMENT TO ESRD BUNDLED PAYMENT RATE TO ACCOUNT FOR CHANGES IN THE UTILIZATION OF CERTAIN DRUGS AND BIOLOGICALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1881(b)(14)(I) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(b)(14)(I)) is amended by inserting ''and before January 1, 2015,'' after ''January 1, 2014,''.

(2) MARKET BASKET.—Section 1881(b)(14)(F)(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(b)(14)(F)(i)) is amended—

(A) in subclause (I)—

(i) by striking ''subclause (II)'' and inserting ''subclauses (II) and (III)''; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''In order to accomplish the purposes of subparagraph (I) with respect to 2016, 2017, and 2018, after determining the increase factor described in the preceding sentence for each of 2016, 2017, and 2018, the Secretary shall reduce such increase factor by 1.25 percentage points for each of 2016 and 2017 and by 1 percentage point for 2018.'';

(B) in subclause (II), by striking ''For 2012'' and inserting ''Subject to subclause (III), for 2012''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subclause:

''(III) Notwithstanding subclauses (I) and (II), in order to accomplish the purposes of subparagraph (I) with respect to 2015, the increase factor described in subclause (I) for 2015 shall be 0.0 percent pursuant to the regulation issued by the Secretary on December 2, 2013, entitled 'Medicare Program; End-Stage Renal Disease Prospective Payment System, Quality Incentive Program, and Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies; Final Rule' (78 Fed. Reg. 72156).''.

(c) DRUG DESIGNATIONS.—As part of the promulgation of annual rule for the Medicare end stage renal disease prospective payment system under section 1881(b)(14) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(b)(14)) for calendar year 2016, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this subsection referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall establish a process for—

(1) determining when a product is no longer an oral-only drug; and

(2) including new injectable and intravenous products into the bundled payment under such system.

(d) QUALITY MEASURES RELATED TO CONDITIONS TREATED BY ORAL-ONLY DRUGS UNDER THE ESRD QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM.—Section 1881(h)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395rr(h)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) in clause (ii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (iv); and

(C) by inserting after clause (ii) the following new clause:

''(iii) for 2016 and subsequent years, measures described in subparagraph (E)(i); and'';

(2) in subparagraph (B)(i), by striking ''(A)(iii)'' and inserting ''(A)(iv)''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) MEASURES SPECIFIC TO THE CONDITIONS TREATED WITH ORAL-ONLY DRUGS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The measures described in this subparagraph are measures specified by the Secretary that are specific to the conditions treated with oral-only drugs. To the extent feasible, such measures shall be outcomes-based measures.

''(ii) CONSULTATION.—In specifying the measures under clause (i), the Secretary shall consult with interested stakeholders.

''(iii) USE OF ENDORSED MEASURES.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subclause (I), any measures specified under clause (i) must have been endorsed by the entity with a contract under section 1890(a).

''(II) EXCEPTION.—If the entity with a contract under section 1890(a) has not endorsed a measure for a specified area or topic related to measures described in clause (i) that the Secretary determines appropriate, the Secretary may specify a measure that is endorsed or adopted by a consensus organization recognized by the Secretary that has expertise in clinical guidelines for kidney disease.''.

(e) AUDITS OF COST REPORTS OF ESRD PROVIDERS AS RECOMMENDED BY MEDPAC.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall conduct audits of Medicare cost reports beginning during 2012 for a representative sample of providers of services and renal dialysis facilities furnishing renal dialysis services.

(2) FUNDING.—For purposes of carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall provide for the transfer from the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund established under section 1841 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395t) to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account of $18,000,000 for fiscal year 2014. Amounts transferred under this paragraph for a fiscal year shall be available until expended.

SEC. 218. QUALITY INCENTIVES FOR COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING AND PROMOTING EVIDENCE-BASED CARE.

(a) QUALITY INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE PATIENT SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH IN COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1834 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(p) QUALITY INCENTIVES TO PROMOTE PATIENT SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH IN COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY.—

''(1) QUALITY INCENTIVES.—In the case of an applicable computed tomography service (as defined in paragraph (2)) for which payment is made under an applicable payment system (as defined in paragraph (3)) and that is furnished on or after January 1, 2016, using equipment that is not consistent with the CT equipment standard (described in paragraph (4)), the payment amount for such service shall be reduced by the applicable percentage (as defined in paragraph (5)).

''(2) APPLICABLE COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY SERVICES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'applicable computed tomography service' means a service billed using diagnostic radiological imaging codes for computed tomography (identified as of January 1, 2014, by HCPCS codes 70450–70498, 71250–71275, 72125–72133, 72191–72194, 73200–73206, 73700–73706, 74150–74178, 74261–74263, and 75571–75574 (and any succeeding codes).

''(3) APPLICABLE PAYMENT SYSTEM DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'applicable payment system' means the following:

''(A) The technical component and the technical component of the global fee under the fee schedule established under section 1848(b).

''(B) The prospective payment system for hospital outpatient department services under section 1833(t).

''(4) CONSISTENCY WITH CT EQUIPMENT STANDARD.—In this subsection, the term 'not consistent with the CT equipment standard' means, with respect to an applicable computed tomography service, that the service was furnished using equipment that does not meet each of the attributes of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) Standard XR–29–2013, entitled 'Standard Attributes on CT Equipment Related to Dose Optimization and Management'. Through rulemaking, the Secretary may apply successor standards.

''(5) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'applicable percentage' means—

''(A) for 2016, 5 percent; and

''(B) for 2017 and subsequent years, 15 percent.

''(6) IMPLEMENTATION.—

''(A) INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall require that information be provided and attested to by a supplier and a hospital outpatient department that indicates whether an applicable computed tomography service was furnished that was not consistent with the CT equipment standard (described in paragraph (4)). Such information may be included on a claim and may be a modifier. Such information shall be verified, as appropriate, as part of the periodic accreditation of suppliers under section 1834(e) and hospitals under section 1865(a).

''(B) ADMINISTRATION.—Chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, shall not apply to information described in subparagraph (A).''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) PROSPECTIVE PAYMENT SYSTEM FOR HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT SERVICES.—Section 1833(t) of the Social Security Act (42 1395l(t)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(20) NOT BUDGET NEUTRAL APPLICATION OF REDUCED EXPENDITURES RESULTING FROM QUALITY INCENTIVES FOR COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY.—The Secretary shall not take into account the reduced expenditures that result from the application of section 1834(p) in making any budget neutrality adjustments this subsection.''.

(B) PHYSICIAN FEE SCHEDULE.—Section 1848(c)(2)(B)(v) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(c)(2)(B)(v)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subclause:

''(VIII) REDUCED EXPENDITURES ATTRIBUTABLE TO APPLICATION OF QUALITY INCENTIVES FOR COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY.—Effective for fee schedules established beginning with 2016, reduced expenditures attributable to the application of the quality incentives for computed tomography under section 1834(p)''.

(b) PROMOTING EVIDENCE-BASED CARE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1834 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m), as amended by subsection (a), is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(q) RECOGNIZING APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA FOR CERTAIN IMAGING SERVICES.—

''(1) PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a program to promote the use of appropriate use criteria (as defined in subparagraph (B)) for applicable imaging services (as defined in subparagraph (C)) furnished in an applicable setting (as defined in subparagraph (D)) by ordering professionals and furnishing professionals (as defined in subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively).

''(B) APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'appropriate use criteria' means criteria, only developed or endorsed by national professional medical specialty societies or other provider-led entities, to assist ordering professionals and furnishing professionals in making the most appropriate treatment decision for a specific clinical condition for an individual. To the extent feasible, such criteria shall be evidence-based.

''(C) APPLICABLE IMAGING SERVICE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'applicable imaging service' means an advanced diagnostic imaging service (as defined in subsection (e)(1)(B)) for which the Secretary determines—

''(i) one or more applicable appropriate use criteria specified under paragraph (2) apply;

''(ii) there are one or more qualified clinical decision support mechanisms listed under paragraph (3)(C); and

''(iii) one or more of such mechanisms is available free of charge.

''(D) APPLICABLE SETTING DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'applicable setting' means a physician's office, a hospital outpatient department (including an emergency department), an ambulatory surgical center, and any other provider-led outpatient setting determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(E) ORDERING PROFESSIONAL DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'ordering professional' means a physician (as defined in section 1861(r)) or a practitioner described in section 1842(b)(18)(C) who orders an applicable imaging service.

''(F) FURNISHING PROFESSIONAL DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'furnishing professional' means a physician (as defined in section 1861(r)) or a practitioner described in section 1842(b)(18)(C) who furnishes an applicable imaging service.

''(2) ESTABLISHMENT OF APPLICABLE APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than November 15, 2015, the Secretary shall through rulemaking, and in consultation with physicians,

practitioners, and other stakeholders, specify applicable appropriate use criteria for applicable imaging services only from among appropriate use criteria developed or endorsed by national professional medical specialty societies or other provider-led entities.

''(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In specifying applicable appropriate use criteria under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall take into account whether the criteria—

''(i) have stakeholder consensus;

''(ii) are scientifically valid and evidence based; and

''(iii) are based on studies that are published and reviewable by stakeholders.

''(C) REVISIONS.—The Secretary shall review, on an annual basis, the specified applicable appropriate use criteria to determine if there is a need to update or revise (as appropriate) such specification of applicable appropriate use criteria and make such updates or revisions through rulemaking.

''(D) TREATMENT OF MULTIPLE APPLICABLE APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA.—In the case where the Secretary determines that more than one appropriate use criterion applies with respect to an applicable imaging service, the Secretary shall apply one or more applicable appropriate use criteria under this paragraph for the service.

''(3) MECHANISMS FOR CONSULTATION WITH APPLICABLE APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA.—

''(A) IDENTIFICATION OF MECHANISMS TO CONSULT WITH APPLICABLE APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall specify qualified clinical decision support mechanisms that could be used by ordering professionals to consult with applicable appropriate use criteria for applicable imaging services.

''(ii) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall consult with physicians, practitioners, health care technology experts, and other stakeholders in specifying mechanisms under this paragraph.

''(iii) INCLUSION OF CERTAIN MECHANISMS.—Mechanisms specified under this paragraph may include any or all of the following that meet the requirements described in subparagraph (B)(ii):

''(I) Use of clinical decision support modules in certified EHR technology (as defined in section 1848(o)(4)).

''(II) Use of private sector clinical decision support mechanisms that are independent from certified EHR technology, which may include use of clinical decision support mechanisms available from medical specialty organizations.

''(III) Use of a clinical decision support mechanism established by the Secretary.

''(B) QUALIFIED CLINICAL DECISION SUPPORT MECHANISMS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subsection, a qualified clinical decision support mechanism is a mechanism that the Secretary determines meets the requirements described in clause (ii).

''(ii) REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements described in this clause are the following:

''(I) The mechanism makes available to the ordering professional applicable appropriate use criteria specified under paragraph (2) and the supporting documentation for the applicable imaging service ordered.

''(II) In the case where there is more than one applicable appropriate use criterion specified under such paragraph for an applicable imaging service, the mechanism indicates the criteria that it uses for the service.

''(III) The mechanism determines the extent to which an applicable imaging service ordered is consistent with the applicable appropriate use criteria so specified.

''(IV) The mechanism generates and provides to the ordering professional a certification or documentation that documents that the qualified clinical decision support mechanism was consulted by the ordering professional.

''(V) The mechanism is updated on a timely basis to reflect revisions to the specification of applicable appropriate use criteria under such paragraph.

''(VI) The mechanism meets privacy and security standards under applicable provisions of law.

''(VII) The mechanism performs such other functions as specified by the Secretary, which may include a requirement to provide aggregate feedback to the ordering professional.

''(C) LIST OF MECHANISMS FOR CONSULTATION WITH APPLICABLE APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA.—

''(i) INITIAL LIST.—Not later than April 1, 2016, the Secretary shall publish a list of mechanisms specified under this paragraph.

''(ii) PERIODIC UPDATING OF LIST.—The Secretary shall identify on an annual basis the list of qualified clinical decision support mechanisms specified under this paragraph.

''(4) CONSULTATION WITH APPLICABLE APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA.—

''(A) CONSULTATION BY ORDERING PROFESSIONAL.—Beginning with January 1, 2017, subject to subparagraph (C), with respect to an applicable imaging service ordered by an ordering professional that would be furnished in an applicable setting and paid for under an applicable payment system (as defined in subparagraph (D)), an ordering professional shall—

''(i) consult with a qualified decision support mechanism listed under paragraph (3)(C); and

''(ii) provide to the furnishing professional the information described in clauses (i) through (iii) of subparagraph (B).

''(B) REPORTING BY FURNISHING PROFESSIONAL.—Beginning with January 1, 2017, subject to subparagraph (C), with respect to an applicable imaging service furnished in an applicable setting and paid for under an applicable payment system (as defined in subparagraph (D)), payment for such service may only be made if the claim for the service includes the following:

''(i) Information about which qualified clinical decision support mechanism was consulted by the ordering professional for the service.

''(ii) Information regarding—

''(I) whether the service ordered would adhere to the applicable appropriate use criteria specified under paragraph (2);

''(II) whether the service ordered would not adhere to such criteria; or

''(III) whether such criteria was not applicable to the service ordered.

''(iii) The national provider identifier of the ordering professional (if different from the furnishing professional).

''(C) EXCEPTIONS.—The provisions of subparagraphs (A) and (B) and paragraph (6)(A) shall not apply to the following:

''(i) EMERGENCY SERVICES.—An applicable imaging service ordered for an individual with an emergency medical condition (as defined in section 1867(e)(1)).

''(ii) INPATIENT SERVICES.—An applicable imaging service ordered for an inpatient and for which payment is made under part A.

''(iii) SIGNIFICANT HARDSHIP.—An applicable imaging service ordered by an ordering professional who the Secretary may, on a case-by-case basis, exempt from the application of such provisions if the Secretary determines, subject to annual renewal, that consultation with applicable appropriate use criteria would result in a significant hardship, such as in the case of a professional who practices in a rural area without sufficient Internet access.

''(D) APPLICABLE PAYMENT SYSTEM DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'applicable payment system' means the following:

''(i) The physician fee schedule established under section 1848(b).

''(ii) The prospective payment system for hospital outpatient department services under section 1833(t).

''(iii) The ambulatory surgical center payment systems under section 1833(i).

''(5) IDENTIFICATION OF OUTLIER ORDERING PROFESSIONALS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to applicable imaging services furnished beginning with 2017, the Secretary shall determine, on an annual basis, no more than five percent of the total number of ordering professionals who are outlier ordering professionals.

''(B) OUTLIER ORDERING PROFESSIONALS.—The determination of an outlier ordering professional shall—

''(i) be based on low adherence to applicable appropriate use criteria specified under paragraph (2), which may be based on comparison to other ordering professionals; and

''(ii) include data for ordering professionals for whom prior authorization under paragraph (6)(A) applies.

''(C) USE OF TWO YEARS OF DATA.—The Secretary shall use two years of data to identify outlier ordering professionals under this paragraph.

''(D) PROCESS.—The Secretary shall establish a process for determining when an outlier ordering professional is no longer an outlier ordering professional.

''(E) CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS.—The Secretary shall consult with physicians, practitioners and other stakeholders in developing methods to identify outlier ordering professionals under this paragraph.

''(6) PRIOR AUTHORIZATION FOR ORDERING PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE OUTLIERS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Beginning January 1, 2020, subject to paragraph (4)(C), with respect to services furnished during a year, the Secretary shall, for a period determined appropriate by the Secretary, apply prior authorization for applicable imaging services that are ordered by an outlier ordering professional identified under paragraph (5).

''(B) APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA IN PRIOR AUTHORIZATION.—In applying prior authorization under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall utilize only the applicable appropriate use criteria specified under this subsection.

''(C) FUNDING.—For purposes of carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary shall provide for the transfer, from the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841, of $5,000,000 to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2021. Amounts transferred under the preceding sentence shall remain available until expended.

''(7) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as granting the Secretary the authority to develop or initiate the development of clinical practice guidelines or appropriate use criteria.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1833(t)(16) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(t)(16)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) APPLICATION OF APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA FOR CERTAIN IMAGING SERVICES.—For provisions relating to the application of appropriate use criteria for certain imaging services, see section 1834(q).''.

(3) REPORT ON EXPERIENCE OF IMAGING APPROPRIATE USE CRITERIA PROGRAM.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that includes a description of the extent to which appropriate use criteria could be used for other services under part B of

title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395j et seq.), such as radiation therapy and clinical diagnostic laboratory services.

SEC. 219. USING FUNDING FROM TRANSITIONAL FUND FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH RATE (SGR) REFORM.

Section 1898(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395iii(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''$2,300,000,000'' and inserting ''$0''.

SEC. 220. ENSURING ACCURATE VALUATION OF SERVICES UNDER THE PHYSICIAN FEE SCHEDULE.

(a) AUTHORITY TO COLLECT AND USE INFORMATION ON PHYSICIANS' SERVICES IN THE DETERMINATION OF RELATIVE VALUES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1848(c)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(c)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(M) AUTHORITY TO COLLECT AND USE INFORMATION ON PHYSICIANS' SERVICES IN THE DETERMINATION OF RELATIVE VALUES.—

''(i) COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may collect or obtain information on the resources directly or indirectly related to furnishing services for which payment is made under the fee schedule established under subsection (b). Such information may be collected or obtained from any eligible professional or any other source.

''(ii) USE OF INFORMATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, subject to clause (v), the Secretary may (as the Secretary determines appropriate) use information collected or obtained pursuant to clause (i) in the determination of relative values for services under this section.

''(iii) TYPES OF INFORMATION.—The types of information described in clauses (i) and (ii) may, at the Secretary's discretion, include any or all of the following:

''(I) Time involved in furnishing services.

''(II) Amounts and types of practice expense inputs involved with furnishing services.

''(III) Prices (net of any discounts) for practice expense inputs, which may include paid invoice prices or other documentation or records.

''(IV) Overhead and accounting information for practices of physicians and other suppliers.

''(V) Any other element that would improve the valuation of services under this section.

''(iv) INFORMATION COLLECTION MECHANISMS.—Information may be collected or obtained pursuant to this subparagraph from any or all of the following:

''(I) Surveys of physicians, other suppliers, providers of services, manufacturers, and vendors.

''(II) Surgical logs, billing systems, or other practice or facility records.

''(III) Electronic health records.

''(IV) Any other mechanism determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(v) TRANSPARENCY OF USE OF INFORMATION.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subclauses (II) and (III), if the Secretary uses information collected or obtained under this subparagraph in the determination of relative values under this subsection, the Secretary shall disclose the information source and discuss the use of such information in such determination of relative values through notice and comment rulemaking.

''(II) THRESHOLDS FOR USE.—The Secretary may establish thresholds in order to use such information, including the exclusion of information collected or obtained from eligible professionals who use very high resources (as determined by the Secretary) in furnishing a service.

''(III) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall make aggregate information available under this subparagraph but shall not disclose information in a form or manner that identifies an eligible professional or a group practice, or information collected or obtained pursuant to a nondisclosure agreement.

''(vi) INCENTIVE TO PARTICIPATE.—The Secretary may provide for such payments under this part to an eligible professional that submits such solicited information under this subparagraph as the Secretary determines appropriate in order to compensate such eligible professional for such submission. Such payments shall be provided in a form and manner specified by the Secretary.

''(vii) ADMINISTRATION.—Chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, shall not apply to information collected or obtained under this subparagraph.

''(viii) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL.—In this subparagraph, the term 'eligible professional' has the meaning given such term in subsection (k)(3)(B).

''(ix) FUNDING.—For purposes of carrying out this subparagraph, in addition to funds otherwise appropriated, the Secretary shall provide for the transfer, from the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841, of $2,000,000 to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account for each fiscal year beginning with fiscal year 2014. Amounts transferred under the preceding sentence for a fiscal year shall be available until expended.''.

(2) LIMITATION ON REVIEW.—Section 1848(i)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(i)(1)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting '', and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(F) the collection and use of information in the determination of relative values under subsection (c)(2)(M).''.

(b) AUTHORITY FOR ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ESTABLISHING PRACTICE EXPENSE RELATIVE VALUES.—Section 1848(c)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(c)(2)), as amended by subsection (a), is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(N) AUTHORITY FOR ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ESTABLISHING PRACTICE EXPENSE RELATIVE VALUES.—The Secretary may establish or adjust practice expense relative values under this subsection using cost, charge, or other data from suppliers or providers of services, including information collected or obtained under subparagraph (M).''.

(c) REVISED AND EXPANDED IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIALLY MISVALUED CODES.—Section 1848(c)(2)(K)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(c)(2)(K)(ii)) is amended to read as follows:

''(ii) IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIALLY MISVALUED CODES.—For purposes of identifying potentially misvalued codes pursuant to clause (i)(I), the Secretary shall examine codes (and families of codes as appropriate) based on any or all of the following criteria:

''(I) Codes that have experienced the fastest growth.

''(II) Codes that have experienced substantial changes in practice expenses.

''(III) Codes that describe new technologies or services within an appropriate time period (such as 3 years) after the relative values are initially established for such codes.

''(IV) Codes which are multiple codes that are frequently billed in conjunction with furnishing a single service.

''(V) Codes with low relative values, particularly those that are often billed multiple times for a single treatment.

''(VI) Codes that have not been subject to review since implementation of the fee schedule.

''(VII) Codes that account for the majority of spending under the physician fee schedule.

''(VIII) Codes for services that have experienced a substantial change in the hospital length of stay or procedure time.

''(IX) Codes for which there may be a change in the typical site of service since the code was last valued.

''(X) Codes for which there is a significant difference in payment for the same service between different sites of service.

''(XI) Codes for which there may be anomalies in relative values within a family of codes.

''(XII) Codes for services where there may be efficiencies when a service is furnished at the same time as other services.

''(XIII) Codes with high intra-service work per unit of time.

''(XIV) Codes with high practice expense relative value units.

''(XV) Codes with high cost supplies.

''(XVI) Codes as determined appropriate by the Secretary.''.

(d) TARGET FOR RELATIVE VALUE ADJUSTMENTS FOR MISVALUED SERVICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1848(c)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(c)(2)), as amended by subsections (a) and (b), is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(O) TARGET FOR RELATIVE VALUE ADJUSTMENTS FOR MISVALUED SERVICES.—With respect to fee schedules established for each of 2017 through 2020, the following shall apply:

''(i) DETERMINATION OF NET REDUCTION IN EXPENDITURES.—For each year, the Secretary shall determine the estimated net reduction in expenditures under the fee schedule under this section with respect to the year as a result of adjustments to the relative values established under this paragraph for misvalued codes.

''(ii) BUDGET NEUTRAL REDISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS IF TARGET MET AND COUNTING OVERAGES TOWARDS THE TARGET FOR THE SUCCEEDING YEAR.—If the estimated net reduction in expenditures determined under clause (i) for the year is equal to or greater than the target for the year—

''(I) reduced expenditures attributable to such adjustments shall be redistributed for the year in a budget neutral manner in accordance with subparagraph (B)(ii)(II); and

''(II) the amount by which such reduced expenditures exceeds the target for the year shall be treated as a reduction in expenditures described in clause (i) for the succeeding year, for purposes of determining whether the target has or has not been met under this subparagraph with respect to that year.

''(iii) EXEMPTION FROM BUDGET NEUTRALITY IF TARGET NOT MET.—If the estimated net reduction in expenditures determined under clause (i) for the year is less than the target for the year, reduced expenditures in an amount equal to the target recapture amount shall not be taken into account in applying subparagraph (B)(ii)(II) with respect to fee schedules beginning with 2017.

''(iv) TARGET RECAPTURE AMOUNT.—For purposes of clause (iii), the target recapture amount is, with respect to a year, an amount equal to the difference between—

''(I) the target for the year; and

''(II) the estimated net reduction in expenditures determined under clause (i) for the year.

''(v) TARGET.—For purposes of this subparagraph, with respect to a year, the target is calculated as 0.5 percent of the estimated

amount of expenditures under the fee schedule under this section for the year.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1848(c)(2)(B)(v) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(c)(2)(B)(v)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subclause:

''(VIII) REDUCTIONS FOR MISVALUED SERVICES IF TARGET NOT MET.—Effective for fee schedules beginning with 2017, reduced expenditures attributable to the application of the target recapture amount described in subparagraph (O)(iii).''.

(e) PHASE-IN OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIVE VALUE UNIT (RVU) REDUCTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1848(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(7) PHASE-IN OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIVE VALUE UNIT (RVU) REDUCTIONS.—Effective for fee schedules established beginning with 2017, for services that are not new or revised codes, if the total relative value units for a service for a year would otherwise be decreased by an estimated amount equal to or greater than 20 percent as compared to the total relative value units for the previous year, the applicable adjustments in work, practice expense, and malpractice relative value units shall be phased-in over a 2-year period.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1848(c)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(c)(2)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (B)(ii)(I), by striking ''subclause (II)'' and inserting ''subclause (II) and paragraph (7)''; and

(B) in subparagraph (K)(iii)(VI)—

(i) by striking ''provisions of subparagraph (B)(ii)(II)'' and inserting ''provisions of subparagraph (B)(ii)(II) and paragraph (7)''; and

(ii) by striking ''under subparagraph (B)(ii)(II)'' and inserting ''under subparagraph (B)(ii)(I)''.

(f) AUTHORITY TO SMOOTH RELATIVE VALUES WITHIN GROUPS OF SERVICES.—Section 1848(c)(2)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(c)(2)(C)) is amended—

(1) in each of clauses (i) and (iii), by striking ''the service'' and inserting ''the service or group of services'' each place it appears; and

(2) in the first sentence of clause (ii), by inserting ''or group of services'' before the period.

(g) GAO STUDY AND REPORT ON RELATIVE VALUE SCALE UPDATE COMMITTEE.—

(1) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States (in this subsection referred to as the ''Comptroller General'') shall conduct a study of the processes used by the Relative Value Scale Update Committee (RUC) to provide recommendations to the Secretary of Health and Human Services regarding relative values for specific services under the Medicare physician fee schedule under section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4).

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study conducted under paragraph (1).

(h) ADJUSTMENT TO MEDICARE PAYMENT LOCALITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1848(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(6) USE OF MSAS AS FEE SCHEDULE AREAS IN CALIFORNIA.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the succeeding provisions of this paragraph and notwithstanding the previous provisions of this subsection, for services furnished on or after January 1, 2017, the fee schedule areas used for payment under this section applicable to California shall be the following:

''(i) Each Metropolitan Statistical Area (each in this paragraph referred to as an 'MSA'), as defined by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget as of December 31 of the previous year, shall be a fee schedule area.

''(ii) All areas not included in an MSA shall be treated as a single rest-of-State fee schedule area.

''(B) TRANSITION FOR MSAS PREVIOUSLY IN REST-OF-STATE PAYMENT LOCALITY OR IN LOCALITY 3.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—For services furnished in California during a year beginning with 2017 and ending with 2021 in an MSA in a transition area (as defined in subparagraph (D)), subject to subparagraph (C), the geographic index values to be applied under this subsection for such year shall be equal to the sum of the following:

''(I) CURRENT LAW COMPONENT.—The old weighting factor (described in clause (ii)) for such year multiplied by the geographic index values under this subsection for the fee schedule area that included such MSA that would have applied in such area (as estimated by the Secretary) if this paragraph did not apply.

''(II) MSA-BASED COMPONENT.—The MSA-based weighting factor (described in clause (iii)) for such year multiplied by the geographic index values computed for the fee schedule area under subparagraph (A) for the year (determined without regard to this subparagraph).

''(ii) OLD WEIGHTING FACTOR.—The old weighting factor described in this clause—

''(I) for 2017, is $\frac{5}{6}$; and

''(II) for each succeeding year, is the old weighting factor described in this clause for the previous year minus $\frac{1}{6}$.

''(iii) MSA-BASED WEIGHTING FACTOR.—The MSA-based weighting factor described in this clause for a year is 1 minus the old weighting factor under clause (ii) for that year.

''(C) HOLD HARMLESS.—For services furnished in a transition area in California during a year beginning with 2017, the geographic index values to be applied under this subsection for such year shall not be less than the corresponding geographic index values that would have applied in such transition area (as estimated by the Secretary) if this paragraph did not apply.

''(D) TRANSITION AREA DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term 'transition area' means each of the following fee schedule areas for 2013:

''(i) The rest-of-State payment locality.

''(ii) Payment locality 3.

''(E) REFERENCES TO FEE SCHEDULE AREAS.—Effective for services furnished on or after January 1, 2017, for California, any reference in this section to a fee schedule area shall be deemed a reference to a fee schedule area established in accordance with this paragraph.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT TO DEFINITION OF FEE SCHEDULE AREA.—Section 1848(j)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(j)(2)) is amended by striking ''The term'' and inserting ''Except as provided in subsection (e)(6)(D), the term''.

(i) DISCLOSURE OF DATA USED TO ESTABLISH MULTIPLE PROCEDURE PAYMENT REDUCTION POLICY.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall make publicly available the information used to establish the multiple procedure payment reduction policy to the professional component of imaging services in the final rule published in the Federal Register, v. 77, n. 222, November 16, 2012, pages 68891–69380 under the physician fee schedule under section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4).

SEC. 221. MEDICAID DSH.

(a) MODIFICATIONS OF REDUCTIONS TO ALLOTMENTS.—Section 1923(f) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–4(f)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (7)(A)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking ''2016 through 2020'' and inserting ''2017 through 2024''; and

(B) in clause (ii), by striking subclauses (I) through (IV), and inserting the following:

''(I) $1,800,000,000 for fiscal year 2017;

''(II) $4,700,000,000 for fiscal year 2018;

''(III) $4,700,000,000 for fiscal year 2019;

''(IV) $4,700,000,000 for fiscal year 2020;

''(V) $4,800,000,000 for fiscal year 2021;

''(VI) $5,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2022;

''(VII) $5,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2023; and

''(VIII) $4,400,000,000 for fiscal year 2024.''; and

(2) by striking paragraph (8) and inserting the following:

''(8) CALCULATION OF DSH ALLOTMENTS AFTER REDUCTIONS PERIOD.—The DSH allotment for a State for fiscal years after fiscal year 2024 shall be calculated under paragraph (3) without regard to paragraph (7).''.

(b) MACPAC REVIEW AND REPORT.—Section 1900(b)(6) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396(b)(6)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''MACPAC shall consult'' and inserting the following:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—MACPAC shall consult''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) REVIEW AND REPORTS REGARDING MEDICAID DSH.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—MACPAC shall review and submit an annual report to Congress on disproportionate share hospital payments under section 1923. Each report shall include the information specified in clause (ii).

''(ii) REQUIRED REPORT INFORMATION.—Each report required under this subparagraph shall include the following:

''(I) Data relating to changes in the number of uninsured individuals.

''(II) Data relating to the amount and sources of hospitals' uncompensated care costs, including the amount of such costs that are the result of providing unreimbursed or under-reimbursed services, charity care, or bad debt.

''(III) Data identifying hospitals with high levels of uncompensated care that also provide access to essential community services for low-income, uninsured, and vulnerable populations, such as graduate medical education, and the continuum of primary through quarternary care, including the provision of trauma care and public health services.

''(IV) State-specific analyses regarding the relationship between the most recent State DSH allotment and the projected State DSH allotment for the succeeding year and the data reported under subclauses (I), (II), and (III) for the State.

''(iii) DATA.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary regularly shall provide MACPAC with the most recent State reports and most recent independent certified audits submitted under section 1923(j), cost reports submitted under title XVIII, and such other data as MACPAC may request for purposes of conducting the reviews and preparing and submitting the annual reports required under this subparagraph.

''(iv) SUBMISSION DEADLINES.—The first report required under this subparagraph shall be submitted to Congress not later than February 1, 2016. Subsequent reports shall be submitted as part of, or with, each annual report required under paragraph (1)(C) during the period of fiscal years 2017 through 2024.''.

SEC. 222. REALIGNMENT OF THE MEDICARE SEQUESTER FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024.

Paragraph (6) (relating to implementing direct spending reductions) of section 251A of

the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901a) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) Notwithstanding the 2 percent limit specified in subparagraph (A) for payments for the Medicare programs specified in section 256(d), the sequestration order of the President under such subparagraph for fiscal year 2024 shall be applied to such payments so that—

''(i) with respect to the first 6 months in which such order is effective for such fiscal year, the payment reduction shall be 4.0 percent; and

''(ii) with respect to the second 6 months in which such order is so effective for such fiscal year, the payment reduction shall be 0.0 percent.''.

SEC. 223. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

(a) CRITERIA FOR CERTIFIED COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICS TO PARTICIPATE IN DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS.—

(1) PUBLICATION.—Not later than September 1, 2015, the Secretary shall publish criteria for a clinic to be certified by a State as a certified community behavioral health clinic for purposes of participating in a demonstration program conducted under subsection (d).

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The criteria published under this subsection shall include criteria with respect to the following:

(A) STAFFING.—Staffing requirements, including criteria that staff have diverse disciplinary backgrounds, have necessary State-required license and accreditation, and are culturally and linguistically trained to serve the needs of the clinic's patient population.

(B) AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES.—Availability and accessibility of services, including crisis management services that are available and accessible 24 hours a day, the use of a sliding scale for payment, and no rejection for services or limiting of services on the basis of a patient's ability to pay or a place of residence.

(C) CARE COORDINATION.—Care coordination, including requirements to coordinate care across settings and providers to ensure seamless transitions for patients across the full spectrum of health services including acute, chronic, and behavioral health needs. Care coordination requirements shall include partnerships or formal contracts with the following:

(i) Federally-qualified health centers (and as applicable, rural health clinics) to provide Federally-qualified health center services (and as applicable, rural health clinic services) to the extent such services are not provided directly through the certified community behavioral health clinic.

(ii) Inpatient psychiatric facilities and substance use detoxification, post-detoxification step-down services, and residential programs.

(iii) Other community or regional services, supports, and providers, including schools, child welfare agencies, juvenile and criminal justice agencies and facilities, Indian Health Service youth regional treatment centers, State licensed and nationally accredited child placing agencies for therapeutic foster care service, and other social and human services.

(iv) Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, independent outpatient clinics, drop-in centers, and other facilities of the Department as defined in section 1801 of title 38, United States Code.

(v) Inpatient acute care hospitals and hospital outpatient clinics.

(D) SCOPE OF SERVICES.—Provision (in a manner reflecting person-centered care) of the following services which, if not available directly through the certified community behavioral health clinic, are provided or referred through formal relationships with other providers:

(i) Crisis mental health services, including 24-hour mobile crisis teams, emergency crisis intervention services, and crisis stabilization.

(ii) Screening, assessment, and diagnosis, including risk assessment.

(iii) Patient-centered treatment planning or similar processes, including risk assessment and crisis planning.

(iv) Outpatient mental health and substance use services.

(v) Outpatient clinic primary care screening and monitoring of key health indicators and health risk.

(vi) Targeted case management.

(vii) Psychiatric rehabilitation services.

(viii) Peer support and counselor services and family supports.

(ix) Intensive, community-based mental health care for members of the armed forces and veterans, particularly those members and veterans located in rural areas, provided the care is consistent with minimum clinical mental health guidelines promulgated by the Veterans Health Administration including clinical guidelines contained in the Uniform Mental Health Services Handbook of such Administration.

(E) QUALITY AND OTHER REPORTING.—Reporting of encounter data, clinical outcomes data, quality data, and such other data as the Secretary requires.

(F) ORGANIZATIONAL AUTHORITY.—Criteria that a clinic be a non-profit or part of a local government behavioral health authority or operated under the authority of the Indian Health Service, an Indian tribe or tribal organization pursuant to a contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or compact with the Indian Health Service pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.), or an urban Indian organization pursuant to a grant or contract with the Indian Health Service under title V of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

(b) GUIDANCE ON DEVELOPMENT OF PROSPECTIVE PAYMENT SYSTEM FOR TESTING UNDER DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 1, 2015, the Secretary, through the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, shall issue guidance for the establishment of a prospective payment system that shall only apply to medical assistance for mental health services furnished by a certified community behavioral health clinic participating in a demonstration program under subsection (d).

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The guidance issued by the Secretary under paragraph (1) shall provide that—

(A) no payment shall be made for inpatient care, residential treatment, room and board expenses, or any other non-ambulatory services, as determined by the Secretary; and

(B) no payment shall be made to satellite facilities of certified community behavioral health clinics if such facilities are established after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) PLANNING GRANTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 1, 2016, the Secretary shall award planning grants to States for the purpose of developing proposals to participate in time-limited demonstration programs described in subsection (d).

(2) USE OF FUNDS.—A State awarded a planning grant under this subsection shall—

(A) solicit input with respect to the development of such a demonstration program from patients, providers, and other stakeholders;

(B) certify clinics as certified community behavioral health clinics for purposes of participating in a demonstration program conducted under subsection (d); and

(C) establish a prospective payment system for mental health services furnished by a certified community behavioral health clinic participating in a demonstration program under subsection (d) in accordance with the guidance issued under subsection (b).

(d) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 1, 2017, the Secretary shall select States to participate in demonstration programs that are developed through planning grants awarded under subsection (c), meet the requirements of this subsection, and represent a diverse selection of geographic areas, including rural and underserved areas.

(2) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall solicit applications to participate in demonstration programs under this subsection solely from States awarded planning grants under subsection (c).

(B) REQUIRED INFORMATION.—An application for a demonstration program under this subsection shall include the following:

(i) The target Medicaid population to be served under the demonstration program.

(ii) A list of participating certified community behavioral health clinics.

(iii) Verification that the State has certified a participating clinic as a certified community behavioral health clinic in accordance with the requirements of subsection (b).

(iv) A description of the scope of the mental health services available under the State Medicaid program that will be paid for under the prospective payment system tested in the demonstration program.

(v) Verification that the State has agreed to pay for such services at the rate established under the prospective payment system.

(vi) Such other information as the Secretary may require relating to the demonstration program including with respect to determining the soundness of the proposed prospective payment system.

(3) NUMBER AND LENGTH OF DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS.—Not more than 8 States shall be selected for 2-year demonstration programs under this subsection.

(4) REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTING DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall give preference to selecting demonstration programs where participating certified community behavioral health clinics—

(i) provide the most complete scope of services described in subsection (a)(2)(D) to individuals eligible for medical assistance under the State Medicaid program;

(ii) will improve availability of, access to, and participation in, services described in subsection (a)(2)(D) to individuals eligible for medical assistance under the State Medicaid program;

(iii) will improve availability of, access to, and participation in assisted outpatient mental health treatment in the State; or

(iv) demonstrate the potential to expand available mental health services in a demonstration area and increase the quality of such services without increasing net Federal spending.

(5) PAYMENT FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDED BY CERTIFIED COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall pay a State participating in a demonstration program under this subsection the Federal

matching percentage specified in subparagraph (B) for amounts expended by the State to provide medical assistance for mental health services described in the demonstration program application in accordance with paragraph (2)(B)(iv) that are provided by certified community behavioral health clinics to individuals who are enrolled in the State Medicaid program. Payments to States made under this paragraph shall be considered to have been under, and are subject to the requirements of, section 1903 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396b).

(B) FEDERAL MATCHING PERCENTAGE.—The Federal matching percentage specified in this subparagraph is with respect to medical assistance described in subparagraph (A) that is furnished—

(i) to a newly eligible individual described in paragraph (2) of section 1905(y) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(y)), the matching rate applicable under paragraph (1) of that section; and

(ii) to an individual who is not a newly eligible individual (as so described) but who is eligible for medical assistance under the State Medicaid program, the enhanced FMAP applicable to the State.

(C) LIMITATIONS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Payments shall be made under this paragraph to a State only for mental health services—

(I) that are described in the demonstration program application in accordance with paragraph (2)(iv);

(II) for which payment is available under the State Medicaid program; and

(III) that are provided to an individual who is eligible for medical assistance under the State Medicaid program.

(ii) PROHIBITED PAYMENTS.—No payment shall be made under this paragraph—

(I) for inpatient care, residential treatment, room and board expenses, or any other non-ambulatory services, as determined by the Secretary; or

(II) with respect to payments made to satellite facilities of certified community behavioral health clinics if such facilities are established after the date of enactment of this Act.

(6) WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall waive section 1902(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(1)) (relating to statewideness) as may be necessary to conduct demonstration programs in accordance with the requirements of this subsection.

(7) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the first State is selected for a demonstration program under this subsection, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress an annual report on the use of funds provided under all demonstration programs conducted under this subsection. Each such report shall include—

(i) an assessment of access to community-based mental health services under the Medicaid program in the area or areas of a State targeted by a demonstration program compared to other areas of the State;

(ii) an assessment of the quality and scope of services provided by certified community behavioral health clinics compared to community-based mental health services provided in States not participating in a demonstration program under this subsection and in areas of a demonstration State that are not participating in the demonstration program; and

(iii) an assessment of the impact of the demonstration programs on the Federal and State costs of a full range of mental health services (including inpatient, emergency and ambulatory services).

(B) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than December 31, 2021, the Secretary shall submit to Congress recommendations concerning whether the demonstration programs under this section should be continued, expanded, modified, or terminated.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) FEDERALLY-QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTER SERVICES; FEDERALLY-QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTER; RURAL HEALTH CLINIC SERVICES; RURAL HEALTH CLINIC.—The terms ''Federally-qualified health center services'', ''Federally-qualified health center'', ''rural health clinic services'', and ''rural health clinic'' have the meanings given those terms in section 1905(l) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(l)).

(2) ENHANCED FMAP.—The term ''enhanced FMAP'' has the meaning given that term in section 2105(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(b)) but without regard to the second and third sentences of that section.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(4) STATE.—The term ''State'' has the meaning given such term for purposes of title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

(f) FUNDING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, there is appropriated to the Secretary—

(A) for purposes of carrying out subsections (a), (b), and (d)(7), $2,000,000 for fiscal year 2014; and

(B) for purposes of awarding planning grants under subsection (c), $25,000,000 for fiscal year 2016.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—Funds appropriated under paragraph (1) shall remain available until expended.

SEC. 224. ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT GRANT PROGRAM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a 4-year pilot program to award not more than 50 grants each year to eligible entities for assisted outpatient treatment programs for individuals with serious mental illness.

(b) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall carry out this section in consultation with the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, the Attorney General of the United States, the Administrator of the Administration for Community Living, and the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

(c) SELECTING AMONG APPLICANTS.—The Secretary—

(1) may only award grants under this section to applicants that have not previously implemented an assisted outpatient treatment program; and

(2) shall evaluate applicants based on their potential to reduce hospitalization, homelessness, incarceration, and interaction with the criminal justice system while improving the health and social outcomes of the patient.

(d) USE OF GRANT.—An assisted outpatient treatment program funded with a grant awarded under this section shall include—

(1) evaluating the medical and social needs of the patients who are participating in the program;

(2) preparing and executing treatment plans for such patients that—

(A) include criteria for completion of court-ordered treatment; and

(B) provide for monitoring of the patient's compliance with the treatment plan, including compliance with medication and other treatment regimens;

(3) providing for such patients case management services that support the treatment plan;

(4) ensuring appropriate referrals to medical and social service providers;

(5) evaluating the process for implementing the program to ensure consistency with the patient's needs and State law; and

(6) measuring treatment outcomes, including health and social outcomes such as rates of incarceration, health care utilization, and homelessness.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than the end of each of fiscal years 2016, 2017, and 2018, the Secretary shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the grant program under this section. Each such report shall include an evaluation of the following:

(1) Cost savings and public health outcomes such as mortality, suicide, substance abuse, hospitalization, and use of services.

(2) Rates of incarceration by patients.

(3) Rates of homelessness among patients.

(4) Patient and family satisfaction with program participation.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term ''assisted outpatient treatment'' means medically prescribed mental health treatment that a patient receives while living in a community under the terms of a law authorizing a State or local court to order such treatment.

(2) The term ''eligible entity'' means a county, city, mental health system, mental health court, or any other entity with authority under the law of the State in which the grantee is located to implement, monitor, and oversee assisted outpatient treatment programs.

(3) The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(g) FUNDING.—

(1) AMOUNT OF GRANTS.—A grant under this section shall be in an amount that is not more than $1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2018. Subject to the preceding sentence, the Secretary shall determine the amount of each grant based on the population of the area, including estimated patients, to be served under the grant.

(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2018.

SEC. 225. EXCLUSION FROM PAYGO SCORECARDS.

(a) STATUTORY PAY-AS-YOU-GO SCORECARDS.—The budgetary effects of this Act shall not be entered on either PAYGO scorecard maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010.

(b) SENATE PAYGO SCORECARDS.—The budgetary effects of this Act shall not be entered on any PAYGO scorecard maintained for purposes of section 201 of S. Con. Res. 21 (110th Congress).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

I sorely wish I were here getting ready to vote on a bill that would permanently repeal and replace the sustainable growth rate. In this Chamber, we passed a bill that would do that and that would have fully offset the cost of the repeal by delaying a provision of the Affordable Care Act that the administration just keeps delaying itself. In fact, it was partially delayed again just yesterday. Unfortunately, we have reached another doc fix deadline. I believe that we must act to protect America's seniors and ensure that they can continue to see the doctors whom they know and trust.

That is why I have introduced legislation that represents a bipartisan-bicameral agreement that will give us additional time to work out our differences and pass permanent repeal. We are closer than ever to reaching that goal. We have an agreement on policy. We need to overcome our differences about the responsible way to pay for those new policies. I hope that we can act before we reach the new deadline of March 31, 2015. In fact, we should try to reach a bicameral agreement before the end of this Congress.

I am glad that Speaker BOEHNER has offered his continuing support to this effort. With the House's having acted, we hope that the Senate can also pass an SGR repeal that has real pay-fors. Then we can begin the process of working through our differences in a conference committee. I am sponsoring this bill today because it is my earnest hope that this is the last patch we will have to pass, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I am sorry, but I simply cannot support yet another temporary SGR patch. This bill is bad for seniors, and it is bad for doctors. We want to achieve a permanent solution to this ongoing problem. This bill does nothing to achieve that goal. In fact, it sets back months and months of hard work. What we should be considering today is the bipartisan-bicameral agreement that my colleagues and I developed. That bill is what doctors' groups and patients' groups support. That bill can also be offset without robbing one provider to pay another provider.

What is before us today doesn't fix the problem. It exacerbates it. We had a true opportunity to finally accomplish what our constituents have asked us to do for a decade, and that is to pass a permanent repeal of the SGR, but the Republican leadership is letting that opportunity slip away. I respect my colleague from Pennsylvania, but I don't believe that if we pass another patch that we are going to go back and do a permanent fix. My fear is, by doing this, we will lose the opportunity to do the permanent fix and that it will simply slip away.

Two weeks ago, the Republicans brought to the floor our agreement, and they added a poison pill offset that they knew the President and the Senate would never accept, a delay of critical Affordable Care Act provisions. All that accomplished was wasting time, which has led us to this scenario of spending another nearly $20 billion on a patch. Meanwhile, this bill includes health policies that have never seen the light of day. Some have been used as offsets, others as sweeteners, to get Members to vote for it, but I am not falling for it. That is no way to govern. The Senate is actually poised to vote on our bipartisan agreement that is fully offset. It does so without cutting from the health care system, and that is the bill we should be considering here today.

Seniors do not want us to kick the can again for another year. The doctor community spoke loudly and clearly yesterday—no more patches. So I say to my colleagues: let's not go down this road again. Instead, let's come together and pass a permanent solution. Let's get the job done. Vote ''no'' on this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), an important member of the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, the SGR cuts would reduce doctors' compensation for treating Medicare patients by 24 percent. Seniors and physicians cannot afford that, and Congress cannot let it happen in 5 days.

The legislation before us would patch the SGR for a year. I support this legislation—of course, reluctantly. Two weeks ago, the House passed a permanent repeal and replacement of the SGR that was fully paid for. The fix provided certainty for doctors who treat Medicare patients—that is what they need—and it incentivized and rewarded doctors to keep seniors healthy.

The Senate needs to negotiate, Mr. Speaker. If they don't like the House pay-for, come up with one. Let's come together and get this done. A patch isn't the best solution. We can replace the SGR, but the Senate has to work with us. Again, let's get this done. Let's work together, and let's get it done for our seniors.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, apparently, Winston Churchill once said:

> Americans will always do the right thing but only after they have tried everything else.

Then again, Churchill never tried to get the doc fix passed in the United States Congress.

For 10 years, we have been trying to fix the sustainable growth rate in Medicare, and for 10 years, we have kicked the can down the road with 17 different short-term patch votes. The Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014 is a mixed bag of some important compromises, like ensuring that there is an accurate valuation of services of the Physician Fee Schedule; some problematic provisions, such as the end-stage renal disease policy; and some provisions that have never been vetted in front of the Congress, in front of committees—at all. More importantly, this bill represents our 18th failure to rebuild the bedrock of the Medicare program, our 18th failure to provide America's seniors with the safety and security of a permanent fix to the SGR.

That is why the AMA is voting ''no'' on this bill. That is why most physicians' groups are strongly opposed to this bill. Last night, my office was flooded with messages from various physician groups.

I, for one, still believe in finding the will to do what is right. I, for one, am dedicated to the principle of seizing the moment and accomplishing big things on behalf of the American people. We thought we were going to do it this time.

When it comes to this mixed-bag piece of legislation, cooked up in the dead of night, put on the Web at 2 minutes before midnight a couple of days ago, revised several times since—not much more than 48 hours ago this stuff started—I vote ''no.'' Enough with trying everything else. It is time to do what is right—a permanent doc fix that is argued, debated, agreed upon. It is what our seniors need. It is what our doctors need to help them manage their practices. It is what our Nation needs and deserves.

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

We have groups who have expressed support for this bill: the American Clinical Laboratory Association; the American College of Radiology; Easter Seals; the Family Research Council; the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation; the Medical Imaging and Technology Alliance, MITA; the National Abstinence Education Association; the Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children; the Pew Charitable Trusts; the ZERO to THREE: National Center on Infants, Toddlers, and Families; AdvaMed, among others.

I would urge Members to seriously consider this.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON), the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. UPTON. I thank the distinguished chair of the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, here we are at the very end of when the doc fix expires, March 31. That is next week. We have tried in a very responsible way for many months to try and resolve this issue, and I commend my friend Mr. WAXMAN and others for passing our bill out of committee last summer at 51–0. I think it was Speaker BOEHNER who said he

didn't think we could honor Mother Teresa for sainthood with a vote like that.

I commend my good friend Mr. CAMP from Michigan and SANDY LEVIN, the gentleman from Michigan, who is on the floor now, as we worked together and worked with the Senate as well to actually lock in place a bill on literally the last day that Chairman BAUCUS was in the United States Senate in order to try and resolve this, and we knew all along that we were going to have to have a pay-for. Here in the House a couple weeks ago, we passed a bill, somewhat on partisan lines, I know—it was not 100 percent on either side—but we passed a 10-year fix with a pay-for.

Now, I had a great ninth grade civics teacher, Mr. Denekas, who is no longer with us. He is with the Lord. I will tell you, as I sit down with my students as I did this week—a lot of them are here in town, my Close Up groups and others—and as I speak to my high schools and colleges, they know there is never such a thing, maybe, as a perfect bill. One of the first lessons in civics is that you pass a bill in the House, and you pass a bill in the Senate, and they are always different. You go to conference, and you work out the differences, and it comes back.

Nobody wants this expiration of the doc fix—nobody. It hurts our physician community. They care about the folks that they treat. Literally, they are going to have almost a 30 percent reduction cut as early as next week in the services that they provide. Let's think about our most vulnerable, too—our seniors. They have got those doctor appointments, and they want to be there. Maybe, with a 30 percent cut, those physicians will say: Gosh, we just can't do this. That appointment is canceled. We are going to just stop serving Medicare patients—period—those over 65.

We don't want that. We don't want that hurting our most vulnerable. So we passed here in the House a couple of weeks ago a 10-year bill. The response from the Senate is—nothing. Yes, we have had some discussions. We have talked with Senator WYDEN, a former member of our committee. He is diligently trying to get something done, but they have got no bill ready for passage on the Senate floor that matches what we did to go to conference. They have got nothing. There is a lot of talk about maybe just doing a bill without a pay-for or some phony savings. That is not what this House is about. It is a lot of money, and we have some rules in the House that you have got to have a pay-for for it, and that is the real difficulty in trying to get things done.

So here we are at the end of the week. The cuts come in next Tuesday, April 1, so we are trying to send another offer to the Senate. If you are not going to take the 10-year fix, let's try a 1-year fix. It is paid for. It is about $20 billion, and there are a number of little provisions that are in there that, I think, are important, again, in working with all sides. Last night, we were somewhat surprised that a number of groups came out against it, but the alternative is that the door gets shut. We don't have a backup plan, all right?

This is the bill. If we can get 290 votes—everybody is here—a two-thirds vote, that is great. We will send yet another offer to the Senate, and they can choose either one. They can take our 10-year bill. They can take a 1-year bill. They can pass something different, and we can go to conference. I must say that this bill is now a 1-year bill, but it doesn't stop us from still trying to negotiate something for a permanent fix, because that is what every one of us wants. It doesn't stop us from getting that done, but at least it stops what otherwise will be the denial of services to the most vulnerable, our seniors, who may not understand what is happening. It continues the process moving forward.

We have got a couple of options that we are teeing up, but, obviously, we have to pass it today, here, with a two-thirds vote. Then let the Senate decide which alternative or it can pass something else, but pass something so that we can go to conference; but if that happens, then the doc fix is not fixed, and for however long that period is the cuts go into place. It would be nice if we could actually pass this by voice. What do you think? It will get us off the dime, and, again, we will toss it to the Senate to try and get it done. No one wants it to expire, but without one of these two bills, it expires, and we don't want that to happen.

I would urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—my friend Mr. PALLONE, my friend Mr. WAXMAN, and others—because, yes, we need to get this done. It is the best that we can do right now, and there is not a plan B for next week.

Mr. Speaker, the specter of physician cuts under Medicare, or SGR, has been an unwelcome threat to seniors' access to quality health care well for over a decade. I rise in support of Chairman PITTS' H.R. 4302, the Protecting Access to Medicare Act, so we can ensure that seniors' access to quality health care is not jeopardized as we continue the effort to permanently resolving this broken system.

While we're not yet over the finish line, we are closer than ever before. Republicans and Democrats of the House and Senate have agreed to the policy of a permanent solution, and this chamber has already passed a bipartisan, fully paid-for bill that would make it a reality.

We understand that our colleagues in the Senate may have a different vision for next steps, and we'd be happy to meet with them to find a package of true offsets that we can all get behind. But, while we wait for the Senate to join us, it is important for us to keep the promises we have made to seniors who depend on the Medicare program.

By coming together with this patch, we will ensure that care will be there when Medicare beneficiaries need it. This package prevents the scheduled 24 percent cut in payment rates, updates the rate through the end of the year, and maintains many of the so-called extenders programs for another year, including the Special Diabetes Program and abstinence program. Finally, it includes important mental health provisions like the Assistant Outpatient Treatment program from Chairman MURPHY'S H.R. 3717, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2013. All of this is achieved in a fiscally responsible manner, saving $1.2 billion while we continue to strive for our permanent solution.

Our work is far from done, but today we restore some certainty to our seniors that their trusted doctor will be available when they are in need of care.

I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

□ 1000

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Mr. PALLONE.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot express my disappointment with the proposed additional temporary patch to the sustainable growth rate, or the SGR—the ''doc fix.''

This was a contrived solution from the very beginning, and it has morphed into a shameful annual ritual, disrupting the provision of medical services in this country, as the parade of medical professionals come to Washington, D.C., to plead with us to not do something crazy.

It is simply, today, an accounting sleight of hand. It is a power play and a fundraising tool, to be sure, that disrupts the practice of medicine.

We have absolutely no intention of ever having the SGR cut occur, but we are not going to allow a reduction on that order of magnitude. We will find some sort of adjustment, as we always have, that will not be satisfactory and will continue the uncertainty and the indignity that is inflicted on people in the health care space and, more important, on the people that they serve.

If you want to actually cut health care spending, we could do so. And if we would stop this charade of meaningless gestures of repealing the Affordable Care Act and actually get down to cases, fine-tuning, and moving forward, we could be there.

There are a range of potential savings within the health care space that is acknowledged by virtually everybody in the industry and every expert that has looked at it. But it can't be done in a cavalier fashion according to some ritualistic formula, and it can't be done overnight, and it is going to require a steady hand, including politicians acting like grownups.

In the meantime, I think it is important to stop this travesty.

Remember, when we had a similar pointless exercise with the alternative minimum tax, realizing that the supposed savings were not real, that the full bite would never take effect, what did we do? We didn't ''pay for it,'' we finally reset the budget baseline and moved on.

That is exactly what we should do with the SGR, and then deal meaningfully with the adjustments in accelerating health care reform, not a 54th time to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

We should be rewarding people who are providing high-value care and finding ways to be more efficient, and adjusting the system to slowly squeeze out our areas of inefficiency. It won't be easy, but it is definitely within our capacity—and it is already starting around the country.

Maybe Congress should consider debating this issue with an open rule, allowing everybody to come to the floor to speak, to offer amendments, to debate it fully, and see what we can come up with. It won't be any worse.

Let's end this charade, give the health care space some certainty, and get down to work being a full partner in the reform and enhancement of our health care system.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 10½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from New Jersey has 12½ minutes remaining.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, can I inquire of the minority how many speakers they have left?

Mr. PALLONE. I have at least two left.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WAXMAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, today, Congress will vote on yet another patch to the Medicare physician payment system. But it should not be that way. We need a permanent fix.

Earlier this year, we seemed on track for a permanent fix. We reached a bipartisan agreement on what a permanent fix should look like. That bill was introduced by both Republican and Democratic leaders: Mr. CAMP, Mr. UPTON, Dr. BURGESS, Mr. LEVIN, myself, Mr. PALLONE, Senator BAUCUS, and Senator HATCH. That bipartisan bill is broadly supported by physician and patient groups.

That bill would not cut providers or beneficiaries to fix payments to physicians, and that bill would fix this problem permanently. The bill before us today is not a permanent fix. It is a short-term fix.

Two weeks ago, Republicans brought up a bipartisan bill with a poison pill offset for the permanent fix that undermines reform for low-income families. That was 2 weeks wasted, where we could have worked towards a permanent solution.

I have heard my Republican colleagues say it is too hard to find offsets or we don't have enough time to come up with the offsets to get a permanent bill done. Let's not forget, Republicans do not insist on offsets for things they really care about. Trillions in tax cuts for the wealthy? No need to offset that. A Medicare prescription drug bill that costs far more than this permanent fix to the SGR? No need to offset that. But when we talk about protecting seniors' access to their doctors, their answer is different.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge that, in the end, this is a vote Members will need to make up their own minds on. We may end up being forced to support a short-term patch, but I am not ready to concede that yet.

I am not ready to support this bill that is before us. Let's keep working on getting a permanent solution.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, let me describe briefly the challenge before us.

This bill is very disappointing. The three committees have worked on a bipartisan basis to put together a bill that would address once and for all SGR and would reform the payment system. Indeed, it would transform this bill that we worked on on a bipartisan basis—the physician payment system—into one that is more acceptable for high quality care, rewards value, and provides needed stability for providers and beneficiaries.

The bill has a much larger cost than this patch, though patches themselves are expensive.

In response to the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I want to make a few comments.

There has been no serious discussion all of these weeks about how we would pay for the permanent fix. There has been a dereliction of responsibility.

Also, what has happened here is this patch is a product that hasn't gone through the legislative process. Instead, it is a complex $20 billion bill with no public hearing, no committee hearings, and no regular order.

The draft of the bill became publicly available at midnight Tuesday, and there were flaws, so it was refiled, and we got this bill just 24 hours ago.

This present legislation contains a completely new, unvetted lab payment system. It undermines delivery system reforms for dialysis patients. It includes promising policy to hold nursing homes accountable for patient care but fails to include key protections to minimize discrimination against certain patients.

In a few words, we deserve better, and we need to do better.

As a result, a large number of physician groups have expressed their opposition to this.

What this bill does today is miss the opportunity to do full-scale repeal and replace the physician payment system.

The Senate still needs to vote on a permanent fix. The chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee said, We passed that kind of bill. Yes, the 10-year fix was a partisan bill that had no chance of passage in the Senate. It has zero chance of passage. The Senate still plans, as I understand, to vote on a permanent fix. We should let the Senate process unfold. We have more time to get this right.

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

Mr. PALLONE. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. LEVIN. It is not correct that, if we don't act today, there will be any impact on seniors. We could let the Senate act to try to do something permanently and come back next week, if we have to, and take up this bill.

So this is the challenge before us. We are here once again doing something that is very temporary, that is very, very expensive, and we are failing to step up to the plate on permanent reform and a permanent fix, and doing it with a legislative process with a product that has not gone through committee, has had no public hearings, has had no real airing. We should not be acting blindly.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Democratic leader.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I also thank him for his leadership on issues that relate to the health and well-being of the American people. I also commend the leadership of the previous speaker, Mr WAXMAN, and our ranking member on the Ways and Means committee, Mr. LEVIN. They have been two champions on the subject of health care in America—and doing so in a fiscally sound way.

While I appreciate and share the concerns here—and I will speak to that—I do think that we have to think carefully about the decision that we make. I know that they have.

The leadership is bringing this bill to the floor on a short fuse, with an expiration date of March 31, without most people in this room having ever seen what is in the bill, which is a missed opportunity.

We should be considering right now a bill that would permanently speak to the SGR. For those in the public, I know it is inside baseball talk, SGR. That is the rate that docs are compensated for treating Medicare patients.

So don't think of SGR—think of the patients. That is what we are doing here. Think of the certainty that they need in terms of their health care, and that is our seniors. Think of the certainty that a permanent fix, paid for or not—but let's say paid for—would mean to remove the uncertainty from this debate.

The American Medical Association is opposed to this bill that is on the floor today because it is a patch.

How many times have you heard people talk about a Band-Aid? We are just putting a Band-Aid on it. We are not getting to the underlying challenge that we face. This is a Band-Aid, and that is why the docs oppose this patch.

I did hear the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) say, If you don't like these pay-fors, suggest your own. Well, we have suggested our own. It is called OCO. It is the Overseas Contingency Operations. The Republicans said that is a gimmick, but it wasn't a gimmick when you put it in the Ryan budget. It is in the Ryan budget. So it works for you where it works for you, but you don't want to put it to work for America's seniors.

□ 1015

So here is the thing. The Senate majority and the House majority came together to produce this patch—this Band-Aid. It is the wrong way to go. It does not address the underlying problem.

We could have done that. We have been trying to do it for 10 years, and it is always, always, always something that the Republican majority has backed away from and limited and done on a short fuse.

There are so many things that are wrong with this bill, but the simple fact is that the clock is ticking, and on March 31, it is bad news for seniors and for the doctors who treat them and the Medicare program.

Our seniors depend on Medicare. They depend on Medicare, and this is a weakening of it. It is just the same old-same old let's see what we can do to find some pay-fors that really undermine the health and well-being of the American people.

Those same pay-fors, done properly, could be part of a permanent fix, but instead, they are part of the Band-Aid. So this is all to say to my colleagues: you are going to have to make your decision as you weigh the equities.

Is it better to just succumb to what we have, no matter how mediocre and how missed an opportunity it is? Or is it better to say: Let's hold out until our Republican colleagues agree to the full SGR, essentially, a fix forever, paid for by OCO?

It is really important to note the following: the shorter the fix, the more expensive it is. We have been seeing that year in and year out. If we had dealt with this, say, 6, 7 years ago, it would have cost much less than it is to patch 1 year to the next, sometimes less than a year to the next.

This is not about reducing the deficit. It is not about the good health of the American people. It is just an ideological reality that we have to deal with from the Republican side of the aisle.

So when the docs—the AMA—says, We are opposed to this, vote it down, that is important to us. I say to them, Talk to your Republican friends, they have the power to do a permanent fix paid for by OCO; they refuse to do it.

So we have something less good that we can do for the American people, and if this sounds a little confusing, it is because it is; and Members have to make the decision as to whether they will vote for this, just because we are forced into it, or whether they want to hold out for something much better.

This would be a more appropriate debate a month ago, where the clock does not run out over the weekend, but this is a tactic. It is a technique used by the majority to force the hand without the proper weighing of equities in all of it.

So, my colleagues, I just urge you to try to weigh those equities. I, myself, come down on the side of supporting the legislation because, frankly, I believe that any uncertainty in the minds of our seniors about their ability to see their doctors will certainly be—the Republicans will say this is because of the Affordable Care Act, and I just don't want to give them another opportunity to misrepresent what this is about.

If the Affordable Care Act never existed, we would still be here debating SGR. They are two separate subjects; but as we know, any excuse will do to undermine the great legislation that the Affordable Care Act was about, life, a healthier life, the liberty of people to pursue their happiness because they had the freedom to do so—better quality, lower cost, more accessibility.

So that is how I come to the conclusion of let's not give them another false claim. Let's just get this done, but let us not give up on the prospect, even before this expires, of having a long-term, permanent fix to SGR.

It makes all the sense in the world. It has no partisanship about it. It is sensible, and it will cost less to do more for our seniors. The challenge is there. The solution is clear. The Republicans have rejected it, so we are at their mercy.

My conclusion is to vote ''yes.'' Members will have to come to their own conclusions on it. I, frankly, wish that the Republicans, in their power, would have brought the bill to the floor under a rule, so we could have a proper debate on it, instead of requiring a 290-vote requirement to pass it.

With the shortness of receiving this information, only this morning, Members are finding out what it is. It is really hard to predict who will vote pro, who will vote con, who will vote ''aye,'' who will vote ''no.'' This is really a silly decision to bring this to the floor in this form when we know the path that is much better.

I am not going to give you another reason to go out there and make your claims about the Affordable Care Act, which have no basis in fact.

With that, I urge my colleagues to pray over it, as I will.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 10½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from New Jersey has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the minority how many speakers they have left?

We are prepared to close.

Mr. PALLONE. At this time, I have one more speaker.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY), a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to follow up on a point that Leader PELOSI just made regarding the OCO account, the Overseas Contingency Operations account, which, at Armed Services, we are dealing with actually right now.

The President came over with his OCO request for this year of $80 billion. This funds the troops over in Afghanistan, the 34,000 that are still fighting courageously to defend our country.

At the end of this year, the projection is that that troop level will be brought down to, at the highest level of 10,000, possibly even lower, and combat missions, for all intents and purposes, are going to come to an end.

As the Congressional Budget Office has demonstrated over and over again, they will score savings with the OCO drawdown that is going to happen at the end of this year. Indeed, the Ryan budget has used those OCO savings to help balance its own priorities, so this is not funny money. This is not hypothetical.

Anyone who has been on a CODEL over to Afghanistan knows we are spending money over there, and starting next year, we are going to spend a lot less money because of the change in our deployments over in Afghanistan.

The cost of the permanent fix to SGR is $135 billion over the next 10 years. You only need a portion of the OCO account to permanently fix SGR, and everybody who has even come close to discussing this issue knows that in this building.

Hopefully, the Senate, when they take this up next week, are going to move forward with a permanent fix using totally valid, verified savings by the Congressional Budget Office in the OCO account.

It is a peace dividend, in terms of drawing down from Afghanistan, that we can finally stabilize the Medicare system by making sure that fees are not going to be subjected to this annual cliff that, again, denies access in far too many cases in doctors' offices all across the country.

So, again, I just want to emphasize the point that it is not like we are powerless here to come up with an SGR fix for which there is bipartisan support, using verifiable, valid savings by the Congressional Budget Office in the OCO account.

Our brave soldiers are going to be drawing down closer to the end of this year to zero. We can use those savings to fix America's health care system.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close. I will continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, do I still have 3 minutes?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Yes. The gentleman from New Jersey has 3 minutes remaining.

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

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out and I would like to enter into the RECORD a letter from the American Medical Association and many, many other physicians' groups, as well as State medical societies, in opposition to the legislation.

Let me just read the first paragraph. It is addressed to the Speaker and to the Democratic leader. It says:

On behalf of the undersigned physician organizations, we are writing to express our strong opposition to H.R. 4302, and we urge you to vote against the bill when it is considered on the floor.

Again, that is from the AMA, many specialty doctor groups, and a number of State medical societies.

I would also point out that it is my strong belief—and I know that my chairman of the subcommittee disagrees on this, but it is my strong belief that if this bill passes, that we will not have an opportunity to bring up the larger permanent fix. We will not negotiate that. I doubt very much that that would be the case.

MARCH 26, 2014.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER AND REPRESENTATIVE PELOSI: On behalf of the undersigned physician organizations, we are writing to express our strong opposition to H.R. 4302, the ''Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014,'' and we urge you to vote against the bill when it is considered on the floor.

Instead of reforming the Medicare physician payment system, Congress seems intent on imposing yet another round of arbitrary provider payment reductions to maintain a corrosive policy that essentially every Member of Congress says should be scrapped. Importantly, by selectively choosing cost savings proposals that were included in the bipartisan, bicameral policy framework set forth in H.R. 4015 and S. 2000, the bill being considered would undermine future passage of that framework and add to the instability that now impedes the development and adoption of health care delivery and payment innovations that can strengthen the Medicare program.

It appears that an unprecedented, bipartisan agreement on Medicare reform is on the verge of being cast aside because elected leaders are unwilling to make tough choices to strengthen programs serving 50 million Americans. We strongly urge Members to vote against this legislation and renew our call for all parties to engage in good faith, bipartisan efforts to enact the physician payment and delivery system reform policy contained in H.R. 4015/S. 2000, the SGR Repeal and Medicare Provider Payment Modernization Act. The endless cycle of short-term remedies that serve to support a failed policy are no longer acceptable.

Sincerely,

American Medical Association; American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology; American Academy of Dermatology Association; American Academy of Neurology; American Academy of Ophthalmology; American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery; American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation; American Academy of Sleep Medicine; American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry; American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons; American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons; American College of Emergency Physicians; American College of Gastroenterology; American College of Mohs Surgery; American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine; American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians; American College of Osteopathic Internists; American College of Osteopathic Surgeons; American College of Phlebology; American College of Physicians.

American College of Surgeons; American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; American Gastroenterological Association; American Geriatrics Society; American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society; American Osteopathic Association; American Pediatric Surgical Association; American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association; American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy; American Society for Reproductive Medicine; American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery; American Society of Disability Evaluating Physicians; American Society of General Surgeons; American Society of Hematology; American Society of Nephrology; American Urogynecologic Society; American Urological Association; College of American Pathologists; Infectious Diseases Society of America; Medical Group Management Association.

National Association of Medical Examiners; North American Spine Society; National Association of Spine Specialists; Renal Physicians Association; Society of Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions; Society of Critical Care Medicine; Society of Gynecologic Oncology; Society of Hospital Medicine; Society of Thoracic Surgeons; Alaska State Medical Association; Arkansas Medical Society; Connecticut State Medical Society; Medical Society of the District of Columbia; Medical Association of Georgia; Hawaii Medical Association; Idaho Medical Association; Illinois State Medical Society; Indiana State Medical Association; Iowa Medical Society; Kentucky Medical Association; Maine Medical Association.

Massachusetts Medical Society; Michigan State Medical Society; Minnesota Medical Association; Mississippi State Medical Association; Missouri State Medical Association; Montana Medical Association; Nebraska Medical Association; Nevada State Medical Association; Medical Society of the State of New York; North Dakota Medical Association; Ohio State Medical Association; Oregon Medical Association; Pennsylvania Medical Society; Rhode Island Medical Society; South Dakota State Medical Association; Utah Medical Association; Vermont Medical Society; Medical Society of Virginia; Washington State Medical Association; Wisconsin Medical Society; Wyoming Medical Society.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), our Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps we ought to have a criteria of everybody who has read this bill can vote on it. My bet is there would be very few Members who would be able to vote on this bill.

This is an 8-page summary of this bill with probably 50 paragraphs in it about changes that have been effected in the Medicare system. None of us know what the substance of this bill is.

We had a lot of rhetoric in 2010 about reading the bills. I challenge any Member to come up here and say: I have read this bill.

I am for a permanent fix in the sustainable growth rate for doctors. I have pledged that for the last 4 or 5 years. We have a bipartisan agreement to effect that exact end; but, as so often is the case, we do not have the courage to rationally fund that agreement. That is why America is in trouble fiscally. This is a game unworthy of this institution and of the American people.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. It is unfortunate that we have been put in this position with less than 48 hours' notice of what is in this bill to do something that all of us know needs to be done.

The doctors of America, at least the organized doctors of America, have said vote ''no'' on this bill because they know, we know, The Wall Street Journal knows, we have to fix this permanently, not patch it every year. It is a fraud. Both sides have committed that fraud, and we ought to stop it.

We ought to fix this. Americans ought to expect us to fix it. The doctors expect us to fix it. Seniors expect us to fix it. What a lamentable fact that we cannot summon the courage and the judgment and the wisdom to do just that.

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

I want to read out the title of a blast that I just received from The Heritage Foundation. Some of our Members might be interested in this. ''A temporary SGR patch is better than permanent deficits in support of the bill.''

My colleagues, this morning, seniors are watching. This is not a game. We are thinking of seniors and certainty for them. A vote ''no'' today is a vote against seniors. We are not voting for the AMA today. We are voting for or against seniors today.

We will continue to work with all of our might for a permanent repeal of SGR. We have worked on this for 3 years. We must get there as soon as possible, but we are at a deadline, and this is the last vote we will have.

If you vote ''no'' on this bill, you are voting for more uncertainty. You are voting for a cut to doctor reimbursement. You are voting against seniors.

Let us vote for seniors this morning. Vote for H.R. 4302.

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

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4302, the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014. It is embarrassing that a year of hard work on a permanent replacement for the Sustainable Growth Rate is being thrown in the trash can for yet another politically motivated short-term fix. The American people sent us here to solve our nation's problems, not kick the can down the road yet again. Now is the time for a permanent solution to this annual problem, and the legislation before us today does nothing to give our seniors and our doctors any certainty moving forward.

Everyone in this body agrees that we need to start rewarding our doctors for the quality of their work rather than the quantity of their work. After months of hearings in the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in conjunction with our colleagues on the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance, we put our heads together and came up with a common-sense proposal to pay our doctors under Medicare for the next decade. Everyone agrees that this policy makes sense and should be adopted. We have work to do to find pay-fors for the legislation, but that is not an insurmountable task. Congress should be moving full steam ahead to find offsets for the policy we all agree on, rather than doing yet another short-term patch that will make a permanent fix more expensive and ultimately harder to attain.

Our constituents are tired of gimmickry and want real results. We should not have to deal with this issue on an annual basis. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting against H.R. 4302 and instead come together to find the necessary offsets to make a permanent fix to the Sustainable Growth Rate a reality.

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I oppose this bill because we need to provide a permanent solution rather than just a band-aid approach to maintaining seniors' access to quality health care.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in opposition to H.R. 4302, the so-called "Protecting Access to Medicare Act," which extends current Medicare physician reimbursement rates for one year.

I strongly support providing adequate compensation to our physicians who serve Medicare patients. Medicare patients in every state make up 10% or more of those who have health insurance.

I oppose H.R. 4302 because it does not provide a long-term fix for Medicare payments to physicians, and the misvalued services under the physician payment system has not been addressed.

The core purpose of the bill is found in its name, the "Sustainable Growth Rate," but that purpose is not being met because the reimbursement rate to physicians is not sustainable for a robust medical care safety net for our nation's seniors.

CMS has made changes to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule and other Medicare payment policies to improve efficiency and accuracy in Medicare payment and the quality of care for our beneficiaries.

CMS has improved payment for primary care services, while enhancing efforts to address payment for misvalued services under the physician payment system.

CMS has begun to implement important delivery system reforms included in the Affordable Care Act, which includes the value-based payment modifier that provides incentives for physicians and physician groups to furnish high-quality, efficient care.

Congress needs to do its part in implementing a reimbursement rate that reflects the reality of providing the care our nation's seniors need and expect.

Medicare patients and the medical payments made to their physicians and medical service providers' is critical to our nation's health care economy.

It is important for our seniors to know that Medicare will be there when they need it. But it is equally important that there are physicians who are willing to attend to them without going broke.

That is why we have a Sustainable Growth Rate or "SGR." Medicare reimbursement enables rural physicians and hospitals to remain open for business.

This bill should not impose another round of arbitrary provider payment reductions to maintain a dysfunctional policy that many member of this House knows should be ended.

This bill undermines the future passage of the framework that was part of the original bipartisan SGR bill that the House had the chance to vote on earlier this month.

We should return to that bill and pass it without any gimmicks so that the modernization of the Medicare health care delivery and payment innovations that can strengthen the program can be implemented.

Mr. Speaker, I have always strongly supported providing adequate compensation to our physicians who serve Medicare patients because it is important for our seniors to know that Medicare will be there when they need it.

Thus, it is critical that we not disrupt timely and adequate payment to Medicare providers.

The bill before us will provide payment certainty for one year, but only for one year. This is not acceptable—if we do not press the issue of reform now—when will it be addressed?

This is better than nothing but what must really be done to provide our seniors and physicians the certainty and security they deserve is to reach an agreement on a permanent replacement for the SGR that is fair, responsible, and fiscally sustainable.

Instead of wasting time trying to repeal, impede, or undermine the Affordable Care Act, or making it more difficult for physicians who care for the elderly we should be working together to reach an agreement on a permanent replacement for the SGR and the $138 billion in offsets needed to pay for that legislation.

That is what the American people sent us here to do.

□ 1030

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4302, 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. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

UKRAINE SUPPORT ACT

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4278) to support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4278

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Ukraine Support Act".

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

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.
Sec. 2. United States policy.

TITLE I—ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS

Sec. 101. Support for democratic governance and civil society in Ukraine.
Sec. 102. Economic reform in Ukraine.
Sec. 103. United States international programming to Ukraine and neighboring regions.
Sec. 104. Overseas Private Investment Corporation.
Sec. 105. Enhanced assistance for law enforcement and the judicial system in Ukraine.
Sec. 106. Enhanced security cooperation among Central and Eastern European NATO member states.
Sec. 107. United States-Ukraine security assistance.
Sec. 108. Recovery of assets linked to corruption in Ukraine.
Sec. 109. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
Sec. 110. Offset.

TITLE II—SANCTIONS PROVISIONS

Sec. 201. Continuation in effect of sanctions with respect to the blocking of certain persons contributing to the situation in Ukraine.
Sec. 202. Imposition of additional sanctions on persons responsible for violence or who undermine the independence, sovereignty, or territorial or economic integrity of Ukraine.
Sec. 203. Imposition of additional sanctions on persons complicit in or responsible for significant corruption in the Russian Federation.
Sec. 204. Report on certain foreign financial institutions.
Sec. 205. Sense of Congress on human rights in the Russian Federation.
Sec. 206. Certification described and submission to Congress.
Sec. 207. Sense of Congress on suspension of all activities and meetings of the NATO-Russia Council.
Sec. 208. Definitions.

TITLE III—REPORTING PROVISIONS

Sec. 301. Annual report on security developments in the Russian Federation and their effects on Ukrainian sovereignty.
Sec. 302. Presidential determination and report on compliance by Russian Federation of its obligations under INF Treaty.
Sec. 303. Report on geopolitical impact of energy exports.
Sec. 304. Amendment to the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act.

SEC. 2. UNITED STATES POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to support the right of the people of Ukraine to freely determine their future, including their country's relationship with other nations and international organizations, without interference, intimidation, or coercion by other countries;

(2) to support the people of Ukraine in their desire to address endemic corruption,

consolidate democracy, and achieve sustained prosperity;

(3) to support the efforts of the Government of Ukraine to bring to justice those responsible for the acts of violence against peaceful protestors and other unprovoked acts of violence related to the anti-government protests that began on November 21, 2013;

(4) to support the efforts of the Government of Ukraine to identify, investigate, recover, and return to the Ukrainian state assets unaccounted for under the leadership and departure from Ukraine of former President Yanukovych, his family, and other current and former members of the Ukrainian government, along with others legitimately charged by government authorities with similar offenses;

(5) to assist the Government of Ukraine in preparations for the presidential election scheduled for May 25, 2014, and to participate in efforts to ensure that this election is conducted in accordance with international standards;

(6) to promote democratic values, transparent and accountable government institutions, and advance United States national security interests through United States international broadcasting, including the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Incorporated;

(7) to support needed economic structural reforms in Ukraine, including in the fiscal, energy, pension, and banking sectors, among others;

(8) to support energy diversification initiatives to reduce Russian control of energy supplies to Ukraine and other European countries, including United States promotion of increased natural gas exports to, and energy efficiency in, Ukraine, which could be enhanced by advances in new energy technologies;

(9) to condemn the armed intervention of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, including its continuing political, economic, and military aggression against that country;

(10) to work with United States allies and partners in Europe and around the world, including at the United Nations, to ensure that all nations refuse to recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and reaffirm the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine;

(11) to refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the illegal referendum in Crimea on March 16, 2014, on the status of that region of Ukraine, which was held under conditions of occupation and coercion by Russian forces;

(12) to support the deployment of international monitors to Ukraine to assess the current status of its territorial integrity and the safety of all people in Ukraine;

(13) to encourage the Government of Ukraine to continue to respect and protect the rights of all ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities;

(14) to encourage the Government of Ukraine to promote and protect the human rights, as recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of all individuals as they seek freedom, democracy, and equality under the law;

(15) to work with United States allies and partners to condemn any violation by Russian Federation occupation forces or their proxies of the rights of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities in Crimea, including the region's Tatar population;

(16) to call on all Ukrainians to respect the legitimate government authorities, as well as all Ukrainian laws and the Constitution of Ukraine in all regions of Ukraine, including Crimea;

(17) to maintain existing sanctions against and consider all available options for further sanctions on the Russian Federation until Ukrainian sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity are not being violated by the Russian Federation; and

(18) to honor and abide by its commitments undertaken pursuant to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, signed at Washington, District of Columbia, on April 4, 1949, and entered into force on August 24, 1949.

TITLE I—ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN UKRAINE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President is authorized and encouraged to provide assistance to support democracy and civil society, including community-based and faith-based organizations, in Ukraine by undertaking the activities described in subsection (b).

(b) ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED.—The activities described in this subsection are—

(1) improving democratic governance, transparency, accountability, rule of law, and anti-corruption efforts;

(2) supporting Ukrainian efforts to foster greater unity among people and regions of the country, combat anti-Semitism and discrimination, and promote respect for religious freedom;

(3) supporting the people and Government of Ukraine in preparing to conduct and participate in free and fair elections, including through domestic and international election monitoring;

(4) assisting Ukraine in diversifying its economy, trade, and energy supplies, including at the national, regional, and local levels;

(5) strengthening democratic institutions and political and civil society organizations; and

(6) expanding free and unfettered access to independent media of all kinds in Ukraine and assisting with the protection of journalists and civil society activists who have been targeted for free speech activities.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the President $50,000,000 for fiscal year 2014 to carry out this section.

SEC. 102. ECONOMIC REFORM IN UKRAINE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Ukrainian economy is weak and vulnerable, as evidenced by short-term debt interest rates as high as 15 percent, a high proportion of foreign exchange-denominated government debt that will mature in 2014 and 2015, a banking sector with non-performing loans at the high level of 14 percent, a financing gap which the Government of Ukraine has estimated will amount to $35 billion over the next two years, and a large underground economy. This economic condition undermines democratic prospects in Ukraine.

(2) Years of poor economic management and performance have undermined and may continue to undermine political stability and unity within Ukraine.

(3) On March 6, 2014, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4152, to redirect previously appropriated funds to cover the cost of roughly $1 billion in loan guarantees for Ukraine.

(b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States to work with other countries and international institutions to stabilize the Ukrainian economy, while promoting critically needed structural economic reforms in Ukraine, including—

(1) cutting the massive natural gas subsidies that have led to market inefficiencies;

(2) reducing the bloated public sector;

(3) maintaining a market-determined exchange rate;

(4) strengthening the vulnerable banking sector;

(5) promoting a robust, independent, and impartial judiciary, due process, and uniform application of law; and

(6) reducing corruption, such as by supporting reform efforts of the Government of Ukraine to pass legislation related to greater accountability for government officials, greater protection of private property, and increased transparency of government funds.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that loan guarantees provided by the United States for Ukraine should be used to promote government, banking and energy sector reform, and anti-corruption efforts in Ukraine.

SEC. 103. UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMING TO UKRAINE AND NEIGHBORING REGIONS.

(a) FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS.—Congress finds and declares the following:

(1) The Russian Government has deliberately blocked the Ukrainian people's access to uncensored sources of information and has provided alternative news and information that is both inaccurate and inflammatory.

(2) United States international programming exists to advance the United States interests and values by presenting accurate and comprehensive news and information, which is the foundation for democratic governance.

(3) The opinions and views of the Ukrainian people, especially those people located in the eastern regions and Crimea, are not being accurately represented in Russian dominated mass media.

(4) Russian forces have seized more than five television stations in Crimea and taken over transmissions, switching to a 24/7 Russian propaganda format; this increase in programming augments the already robust pro-Russian programming to Ukraine.

(5) United States international programming has the potential to combat this anti-democratic propaganda.

(b) PROGRAMMING.—Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Incorporated, and the Voice of America service to Ukraine and neighboring regions shall—

(1) provide news and information that is accessible, credible, and accurate;

(2) emphasize investigative and analytical journalism to highlight inconsistencies and misinformation provided by Russian or pro-Russian media outlets;

(3) prioritize programming to areas where access to uncensored sources of information is limited or non-existent, especially populations serviced by Russian supported media outlets;

(4) increase the number of reporters and organizational presence in eastern Ukraine, especially in Crimea;

(5) promote democratic processes, respect for human rights, freedom of the press, and territorial sovereignty; and

(6) take necessary preparatory steps to continue and increase programming and content that promotes democracy and government transparency in Russia.

(c) PROGRAMMING SURGE.—RFE/RL, Incorporated, and Voice of America programming to Ukraine and neighboring regions shall—

(1) prioritize programming to eastern Ukraine, including Crimea, and Moldova, and to ethnic and linguistic Russian populations, as well as to Tatar minorities;

(2) prioritize news and information that directly contributes to the target audiences' understanding of political and economic developments in Ukraine and Moldova, including countering misinformation that may originate from other news outlets, especially Russian supported news outlets;

(3) provide programming content 24 hours a day, seven days a week to target populations, using all available and effective distribution outlets, including—

(A) at least 8 weekly hours of total original television and video content in Ukrainian, Russian, and Tatar languages, not inclusive of live video streaming coverage of breaking news, to be distributed on satellite, digital, and through regional television affiliates by the Voice of America; and

(B) at least 14 weekly hours the total audio content in Ukrainian, Russian, and Tatar languages to be distributed on satellite, digital, and through regional radio affiliates of RFE/RL, Incorporated;

(4) expand the use, audience, and audience engagement of mobile news and multimedia platforms by RFE/RL, Incorporated, and the Voice of America, including through Internet-based social networking platforms; and

(5) partner with private sector broadcasters and affiliates to seek and start coproduction for new, original content, when possible, to increase distribution.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2014, in addition to funds otherwise made available for such purposes, up to $10,000,000 to carry out programming in the Ukrainian, Balkan, Russian, and Tatar language services of RFE/RL, Incorporated, and the Voice of America, for the purpose of bolstering existing United States programming to the people of Ukraine and neighboring regions, and increasing programming capacity and jamming circumvention technology to overcome any disruptions to service.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Broadcasting Board of Governors shall submit to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Foreign Relations and Appropriations of the Senate a detailed report on plans to increase broadcasts pursuant to subsections (a) and (b).

SEC. 104. OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION.

It is the sense of Congress that the Overseas Private Investment Corporation should prioritize investments in Ukraine.

SEC. 105. ENHANCED ASSISTANCE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM IN UKRAINE.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States—

(1) to assist Ukraine to eliminate the human rights abuses associated with the Berkut forces in order to foster a democratically reformed police force with strong public oversight, which is critical to fostering political unity and stability throughout Ukraine; and

(2) to assist Ukraine to develop a robust, independent, and impartial judicial system at national, regional, and local levels, which is essential to ensure that the rights of all citizens are respected, and maintain appropriate checks and balances between the coequal branches of government.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated $8,000,000 for fiscal year 2014 to enhance United States efforts to assist Ukraine to strengthen law enforcement capabilities and maintain the rule of law.

SEC. 106. ENHANCED SECURITY COOPERATION AMONG CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN NATO MEMBER STATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other appropriate United States departments and agencies, shall seek to provide enhanced security cooperation with Central and Eastern European North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states by undertaking the activities described in subsection (b).

(b) ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED.—The activities described in this subsection are—

(1) enhancing existing security cooperation, including defense and military-to-military cooperation, among Central and Eastern European NATO member states;

(2) enhancing security relationships among the United States, the European Union, and Central and Eastern European NATO member states;

(3) providing defense articles, defense services, and military training to Central and Eastern European NATO member states;

(4) expanding the scope and frequency of military exercises among Central and Eastern European NATO member states; and

(5) supporting greater reform, professionalism, and capacity-building efforts within the military, intelligence, and security services in Central and Eastern European NATO member states.

SEC. 107. UNITED STATES-UKRAINE SECURITY ASSISTANCE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) in fiscal year 2013 the United States provided Ukraine with nearly $2,000,000 in assistance under chapter 5 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2347 et seq.; relating to International Military Education Training) and nearly $7,000,000 in assistance under section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2763; relating to the Foreign Military Financing Program); and

(2) Ukraine has been a longstanding member of NATO's Partnership for Peace.

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

(1) United States assistance to Ukraine under chapter 5 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act should be increased;

(2) consistent with section 506(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2318(a)), the President is encouraged to draw down defense articles from the stocks of the Department of Defense, in order to provide security assistance, which could include communication equipment, clothing, fuel and other forms of appropriate assistance, to the Government of Ukraine; and

(3) the Government of Ukraine should make greater efforts to secure the protection of classified information and military equipment.

(c) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States, in consultation with the Government of Ukraine, to enhance Ukraine's self defense, including through appropriate assistance to improve the capabilities of the country's armed forces.

(d) REVIEW OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other appropriate United States departments and agencies, shall submit to Congress a report on the results of a review of all United States security assistance to the Government of Ukraine.

(2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

SEC. 108. RECOVERY OF ASSETS LINKED TO CORRUPTION IN UKRAINE.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Administration should provide expedited assistance to the Government of Ukraine through appropriate United States Government and multilateral programs, including the Department of Justice's Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative, the Egmont Group, the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative, the Camden Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network, and the Asset Recovery Focal Point Initiative, to identify, investigate, secure, and recover assets missing from the Government of Ukraine or linked to purported acts of corruption by former President Viktor Yanukovych, members of his family, other former or current senior foreign political figures of the Government of Ukraine, and their accomplices in any jurisdiction.

(b) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''senior foreign political figure'' has the meaning given the term in section 208.

SEC. 109. EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) Article 1 of the Agreement Establishing the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) states that the EBRD should support investments in countries that are committed to and applying the principles of multiparty democracy, pluralism, and market economics, and the EBRD has recognized that Russian ''progress in the application of these principles . . . has been uneven''.

(2) Russia received 21 percent of the investments made by the EBRD in 2013, which is more than any other country received from the EBRD in that year, and has received an inordinate ratio of investment from the EBRD since the 2006 Capital Resources Review.

(b) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) should increase investments in Ukraine and cease new investments in the Russian Federation, and the United States Government should press the EBRD to support new investment in Ukraine and halt consideration of new investment in Russia.

SEC. 110. OFFSET.

Section 102(a) of the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009 (22 U.S.C. 8412(a); Public Law 111–73; 123 Stat. 2068) is amended by striking ''$1,500,000,000'' and inserting ''$1,430,000,000''.

TITLE II—SANCTIONS PROVISIONS

SEC. 201. CONTINUATION IN EFFECT OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE BLOCKING OF CERTAIN PERSONS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—United States sanctions described in subsection (b), as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, shall remain in effect until the earlier of—

(1) the date that is 90 days after the date on which the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees the certification described in subsection (a) of section 206 in accordance with subsection (b) of such section; or

(2) the date that is 30 days after any date subsequent to January 1, 2020, on which the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees in writing a determination that the termination of such sanctions imposed is in the vital national security interests of the United States.

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—United States sanctions described in this subsection are sanctions imposed under the following executive orders:

(1) Executive Order 13660 (March 6, 2014; relating to blocking property of certain persons contributing to the situation in Ukraine).

(2) Executive Order 13661 (March 16, 2014; relating to blocking property of additional persons contributing to the situation in Ukraine).

(3) Executive Order 13662 (March 20, 2014; relating to blocking property of additional persons contributing to the situation in Ukraine).

SEC. 202. IMPOSITION OF ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS ON PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLENCE OR WHO UNDERMINE THE INDEPENDENCE, SOVEREIGNTY, OR TERRITORIAL OR ECONOMIC INTEGRITY OF UKRAINE.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States to impose sanctions with respect to those individuals within and outside of the Government of the Russian Federation whom the President determines wields significant influence over the formation and implementation of Russian foreign policy, in particular with respect to the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, democracy, and territorial integrity.

(b) CRITERIA FOR IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—A foreign person or an alien is subject to sanctions under subsection (c) in accordance with the provisions of such subsection if the foreign person or alien, on or after November 21, 2013—

(1) is knowingly responsible for or complicit in, or engaged in, directly or indirectly—

(A) actions that significantly undermine democratic processes or institutions in Ukraine;

(B) actions that significantly threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine;

(C) acts of significant corruption in Ukraine, or the seizure or expropriation of significant economic assets from Ukraine, including the expropriation of private or state assets for personal gain, or the facilitation or transfer of the proceeds of such expropriation to foreign jurisdictions; or

(D) the commission of serious human rights abuses against citizens of Ukraine or citizens of the Russian Federation;

(2) is a current or former senior foreign political figure of the Government of the Russian Federation who has engaged in any activity described in paragraph (1);

(3) operates in the arms or related materiel sector in the Russian Federation that has engaged in any activity described in paragraph (1);

(4) is a current or former senior foreign political figure of an entity that has, or whose members have, knowingly engaged in any activity described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3) or of an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this section;

(5) has knowingly materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, any activity described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3) or of any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this section; or

(6) is owned or controlled by, or has acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this section.

(c) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(A) ASSET BLOCKING.—With respect to a foreign person who the President, acting through the Secretary of the Treasury and in consultation with the Secretary of State (or their designees), determines meets the requirements described in subsection (b) (and, if the President determines such foreign person is a senior foreign political figure, such foreign person is not included in the classified annex of a report submitted to the appropriate congressional committees under subsection (e)(1)), the President, acting through the Secretary of the Treasury and in consultation with the Secretary of State (or their designees), shall to the extent necessary investigate, block during the pendency of an investigation, regulate, direct and compel, nullify, void, prevent or prohibit, any acquisition, holding, withholding, use, transfer, withdrawal, transportation, or exportation of, or dealing in, or exercising any right, power, or privilege with respect to, or transactions involving, any property or interests in property of such person to the extent such property or interests in property are subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, pursuant to the applicable provisions of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).

(B) ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(i) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien who the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) knows, or has reason to believe, meets any of the criteria described in subsection (b) is—

(I) inadmissible to the United States;

(II) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(III) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(ii) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The issuing consular officer, the Secretary of State, or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) shall revoke any visa or other entry documentation issued to an alien who meets any of the criteria described in subsection (b), regardless of when issued.

(II) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A revocation under subclause (I)—

(aa) shall take effect immediately; and

(bb) shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien's possession.

(2) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of paragraph (1)(A) or any regulation, license, or order issued to carry out paragraph (1)(A) shall be subject to the penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

(3) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—The President shall, not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, promulgate regulations as necessary for the implementation of this section.

(4) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions under paragraph (1)(B) shall not apply to an alien if admitting the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

(5) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the President to impose additional sanctions pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), relevant executive orders, regulations, or other provisions of law.

(d) WAIVER.—The President may waive the application of sanctions under subsection (c) with respect to a foreign person or alien if the President—

(1) determines that such a waiver is vital to the national interest of the United States; and

(2) not less than 15 days after the waiver takes effect, submits to the appropriate congressional committees a notice of the waiver and a justification for such waiver.

(e) REPORT.—

(1) REPORT REQUIRED.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and at least once every 180 days thereafter for a period not to exceed 2 years, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a detailed report with respect to senior foreign political figures of the Russian Federation that have been determined to have engaged in activities described in subsection (b).

(B) FORM.—The report required by subparagraph (A) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

(2) REQUESTS BY CHAIRPERSON AND RANKING MEMBER OF APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after receiving a written request from the chairperson and ranking member of one of the appropriate congressional committees with respect to whether a senior foreign political figure of the Russian Federation is responsible for engaging in activities described in subsection (b), the President shall submit a response to the chairperson and ranking member of the committee which made the request with respect to the status of the person.

(B) FORM.—The President may submit a response required by subparagraph (A) in classified form if the President determines that it is necessary for the national security interests of the United States to do so.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMITTED.—The term ''admitted'' has the meaning given such term in section 101(a)(13)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(13)(A)).

(2) ALIEN.—The term ''alien'' has the meaning given such term in section 101(a)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(3)).

(3) FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term ''financial institution'' has the meaning given that term in section 5312 of title 31, United States Code.

(4) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term ''foreign person'' means—

(A) an individual who is not a United States person;

(B) a corporation, partnership, or other nongovernmental entity which is not a United States person; or

(C) any representative, agent or instrumentality of, or an individual working on behalf of a foreign government.

(5) PAROLED.—The term ''paroled'' means paroled into the United States under section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(d)(5)).

(6) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term ''United States person'' means—

(A) a United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence to the United States; or

(B) an entity organized under the laws of the United States or of any jurisdiction within the United States, including a foreign branch of such an entity.

(g) TERMINATION.—This section and any sanction imposed by this section shall remain in effect until the earlier of—

(1) the date that is 90 days after the date on which the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees the certification described in subsection (a) of section 206 in accordance with subsection (b) of such section; or

(2) the date that is 30 days after any date subsequent to January 1, 2020, on which the

President submits to the appropriate congressional committees in writing a determination that the termination of this section and the sanctions imposed by this section is in the vital national security interests of the United States.

SEC. 203. IMPOSITION OF ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS ON PERSONS COMPLICIT IN OR RESPONSIBLE FOR SIGNIFICANT CORRUPTION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) On March 20, 2014, the Department of the Treasury designated four individuals and one financial institution for acting for or on behalf of or materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, a senior official of the Government of the Russian Federation.

(2) Widespread corruption at senior levels of the Government of the Russian Federation, in combination with the suppression of political freedoms and the concentration of enormous wealth in the hands of individuals exercising extensive influence over government policy, has contributed to the establishment of an authoritarian system that does not respect the rights of the Russian people.

(b) AUTHORITY FOR IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—

(1) ASSET BLOCKING.—The President, acting through the Secretary of the Treasury and in consultation with the Secretary of State (or their designees), is authorized to impose sanctions described in paragraph (1)(A) of section 202(c) in accordance with the provisions of such section against a foreign person if the foreign person is a senior foreign political figure or a close associate of such senior foreign political figure with respect to whom the President, acting through the Secretary of the Treasury and in consultation with the Secretary of State (or their designees), determines meets one or more of the criteria described in subsection (c).

(2) ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—The Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) is authorized to impose sanctions described in paragraph (1)(B) of section 202(c) in accordance with the provisions of such section against an alien if the alien is a senior foreign political figure or a close associate of such senior foreign political figure with respect to whom the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) knows, or has reason to believe, meets one or more of the criteria described in subsection (c).

(c) CRITERIA FOR IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—The criteria described in this subsection are the following:

(1) The foreign person or alien is responsible for, or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, acts of significant corruption in the Russian Federation, including the expropriation of private or public assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, bribery, or the facilitation or transfer of the proceeds of corruption to foreign jurisdictions.

(2) The foreign person or alien has materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, an act described in paragraph (1).

(d) WAIVER.—The waiver provisions of subsection (d) of section 202 shall apply with respect to this section and any sanction imposed by this section to the same extent and in the same manner as such waiver provisions apply to section 202 and any sanction imposed by such section.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms ''foreign person'' and ''alien'' have the meanings given such terms in section 202(f).

SEC. 204. REPORT ON CERTAIN FOREIGN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) On February 26, 2014, the Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network advised United States financial institutions of their responsibility to take reasonable, risk-based steps regarding the potential suspicious movement of assets related to Viktor Yanukovych departing Kyiv and abdicating his responsibilities and other senior officials resigning from their positions or departing Kyiv.

(2) United States financial institutions are required to apply enhanced scrutiny to private banking accounts held by or on behalf of senior foreign political figures and to monitor transactions that could potentially represent misappropriated or diverted state assets, the proceeds of bribery or other illegal payments, or other public corruption proceeds.

(3) On March 3, 2014, the Government of Ukraine announced that it had initiated criminal proceedings against a number of former Ukrainian officials or close associates of former Ukrainian officials.

(4) On March 5, 2014, the European Union, based on information from Ukraine's Prosecutor General, issued a Council Regulation requiring the European Union to freeze the funds and economic resources of various former Ukrainian officials and their close associates.

(5) The Government of Canada has taken similar action against the same individuals.

(6) The measures being taken against these former Ukrainian officials and their close associates increase the risk that they will seek to move their assets in a deceptive fashion.

(7) Foreign financial institutions should apply similar, enhanced due-diligence and reporting requirements.

(8) The United States has a strong interest in seeing the international financial system protected from illicit financial activity, including money laundering, terrorism and proliferation financing, transnational organized crime, and the misappropriation of state assets, and international sanctions evasion, among others.

(9) The Department of the Treasury possesses a range of authorities to insulate the United States financial system from entities or jurisdictions that pose an illicit financing risk.

(b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States to use all of its regulatory and statutory authorities to closely scrutinize all foreign financial institutions, including those in the Russian Federation, that may be complicit in enabling foreign persons and transnational criminal enterprises to evade or otherwise circumvent United States and international sanctions, launder the proceeds of criminal activity, finance acts of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or any other illicit activity that presents risks and vulnerabilities to the United States financial system.

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter for a period not to exceed 2 years, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on—

(A) foreign financial institutions that are in direct control of Government of Ukraine state-owned or controlled assets in a manner determined by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury to be contrary to the interests of the Government of Ukraine;

(B) foreign financial institutions determined by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury to be complicit in illicit financial activity, including money laundering, terrorism and proliferation financing, transnational organized crime, or misappropriation of state assets, that are—

(i) organized under the laws of the Russian Federation; or

(ii) owned or controlled by a foreign person described in section 202(b); and

(C) foreign financial institutions that are directly or indirectly assisting or otherwise aiding the violation of Ukrainian sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, including the Crimea.

(2) FORM.—The report required to be submitted under this subsection shall be submitted in an unclassified form, to the extent appropriate, but may include a classified annex.

SEC. 205. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

It is the sense of Congress that the President should greatly expand the list of 18 Russian officials and others published on April 12, 2013, who were engaged in actions described in section 404 of the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012 (title IV of Public Law 112–208; 22 U.S.C. 5811) regarding the death of Sergei Magnitsky, illegal activity by officials of the Government of the Russian Federation, or violations of human rights and other offenses in Russia.

SEC. 206. CERTIFICATION DESCRIBED AND SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A certification described in this section is a certification of the President to Congress that Ukrainian sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity is not being violated by the Russian Federation or any other state actor.

(b) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall submit the certification described in subsection (a) to the appropriate congressional committees in writing and shall include a justification for the certification.

(2) FORM OF CERTIFICATION.—The certification described in subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

SEC. 207. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SUSPENSION OF ALL ACTIVITIES AND MEETINGS OF THE NATO-RUSSIA COUNCIL.

It is the sense of Congress that the United States should work to temporarily suspend all activities and meetings of the NATO-Russia Council.

SEC. 208. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—Except as otherwise provided, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

(B) Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate.

(2) SENIOR FOREIGN POLITICAL FIGURE.—The term ''senior foreign political figure'' has the meaning given the term in section 1010.605 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations.

TITLE III—REPORTING PROVISIONS

SEC. 301. ANNUAL REPORT ON SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THEIR EFFECTS ON UKRAINIAN SOVEREIGNTY.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than September 30, 2014, and September 30 of each year thereafter through 2020, the Secretary of State shall submit to the specified congressional committees a report, in both classified and unclassified form, on the current and future security and foreign policy posture of the Russian Federation (in this section referred to as ''Russia'').

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the security situation in regions neighboring Russia, including Crimea.

(2) The goals and factors shaping the security strategy of the Government of Russia, including potential annexation of non-Russian territory.

(3) Trends in Russian security behavior that would be designed to achieve, or that are consistent with, the goals described in paragraph (2).

(4) An assessment of the global and regional security objectives of the Government of Russia, including objectives that would affect the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Middle East, or the People's Republic of China.

(5) A detailed assessment of the sizes, locations, and capabilities of the nuclear, special operations, land, sea, and air forces of the Government of Russia and how they affect neighboring countries, including Ukraine.

(6) Developments in Russian military doctrine and training and whether the developments have differed from before the annexation of Crimea.

(7) Other security developments involving Russia that the Secretary of State considers relevant to United States national security.

(c) SPECIFIED CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''specified congressional committees'' means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.

SEC. 302. PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION AND REPORT ON COMPLIANCE BY RUSSIAN FEDERATION OF ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER INF TREATY.

(a) FINDING.—Congress finds that there are reports that the Russian Federation is in material breach of its obligations under the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, commonly referred to as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed at Washington December 8, 1987, and entered into force June 1, 1988.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report that includes a determination as to whether or not the Russian Federation is in material breach of its obligations under the INF Treaty.

(2) ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—If the President determines that the Russian Federation is in material breach of its obligations under the INF Treaty, the report shall also include the following:

(A) A description of the measures taken to hold the Russian Federation accountable for its violation of its obligations under the INF Treaty.

(B) A description of the measures being taken to ensure that the Russian Federation completely and verifiably eliminates any military system that constitutes a material breach of its obligations under the INF Treaty.

(3) FORM.—The report required by this subsection shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

SEC. 303. REPORT ON GEOPOLITICAL IMPACT OF ENERGY EXPORTS.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Department of State's Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a detailed, quantitative, and substantive report on the potential short, medium, and long-term impacts of increased United States natural gas and oil exports on Russia's economic and political influence over Ukraine and other European countries.

(b) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

SEC. 304. AMENDMENT TO THE IRAN, NORTH KOREA, AND SYRIA NONPROLIFERATION ACT.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Iran continues its longstanding effort to obtain banned components for its nuclear and missile programs in violation of its obligations under successive United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

(2) Russian entities, including Rosoboronexport, have been sanctioned with respect to proliferation activities, particularly sanctions under the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act (Public Law 106–178; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note).

(3) The Department of State must expeditiously restore the deterrent effect of the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act by fully applying and enforcing such Act.

(b) AMENDMENT.—Section 2 of the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act (Public Law 106–178; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(f) PLAN TO EXPEDITE REPORTS AND SANCTIONS UNDER THIS ACT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of the Ukraine Support Act, the President shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations in the Senate, a plan, to include specific timetables, to expedite the implementation of this Act with respect to submission of reports required under subsection (a) and the application of measures to certain foreign persons under section 3.

''(2) SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON SYRIA.—In the submission of reports required under subsection (a) and in accordance with the plan required under paragraph (1), the President is encouraged to place a special emphasis on any foreign person in Russia, including any Russian Federation official, that is engaged in any activity described in subsection (a) with respect to the government of President Bashar al-Assad and any affiliates thereof.

''(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to preclude or exempt the President from fulfilling or otherwise deviating from the requirements under subsection (b).''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous materials in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, President Vladimir Putin's decision to forcibly annex Crimea was based on his calculation that the price would be bearable.

Now, in fact, Russia is susceptible to pressure. Seventy percent of all the exports from Russia are from oil and gas; 52 percent of the budget that goes to the power behind Mr. Putin's military and his government comes from that monopoly pricing on natural gas. That supplies the budget for Russia. That is what gives him the power to manipulate the situation, the monopoly over gas that he has in Eastern Europe, to manipulate this situation with respect to Ukraine.

If we want to check aggression from Russia, we must push back, and we must work together quickly, not only to confront this monopoly circumstance that exists there, but also to quickly impose tough sanctions on President Putin and on those who have been his accomplices in carrying out this aggression.

Diplomatically, our European allies have helped to eject Russia from the G8 and have suspended all other engagement with Russia until this crisis is peacefully resolved. Economically, they have also imposed sanctions, including asset freezes and visa bans, against many Russian leaders. Our targets must include government officials as well as those who hold no formal position but who, nevertheless, exercise great influence over President Putin's policy and have supported aggression. That includes the so-called oligarchs and others who have amassed enormous wealth through corruption and through other illegitimate means.

We must make clear that if they do not end this crisis—which they have deliberately created, by the way—or if they choose to go even further, then we and our allies will ratchet up the sanctions pressure.

We must also move quickly to strengthen Ukraine by reinforcing its sovereignty, its independence and territorial integrity, and assist the new government in meeting the enormous challenges it faces.

This bill provides assistance to strengthen civil society in Ukraine, to combat corruption, to help recover assets stolen by former Ukrainian officials, to reform the police and the justice sector, to promote the independent

media, to strengthen Ukraine's defense, and to help prepare for the run-up to the Presidential election, which is scheduled now on May 25.

And I will add that, in several weeks, I will be leading a bipartisan delegation from this House, with the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), to Ukraine. And I will add that his forefathers, in fact, come from Ukraine. We will be there to meet with the Parliament, the leadership, and the electoral commission in advance of that election.

This bill also directs the assistance already approved by the House to help get the Ukrainian economy back on its feet, including by promoting fundamental economic reforms in the country. Those tough reforms will be essential.

Mr. Speaker, Moscow is using propaganda to sow confusion and fear and unrest inside Ukraine right now, which it then exploits to justify its actions. To counter that effort, this legislation enhances funding for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Voice of America to expand broadcasting in the Russian language, in Ukrainian, in Tatar in order to provide the accurate news and information on the ground across Ukraine. No amount of aid will help Ukraine if Russian propaganda rules the day.

Another priority must be to end Russia's ability to use its energy reserves to blackmail Ukraine and other countries, including many of our NATO allies. Russia supplies 100 percent of Lithuania's natural gas. Well, it might not be that surprising, then, that Lithuania pays the highest price for gas of any country in Eastern Europe. And it supplies two-thirds of Poland's gas.

Energy sales earn Russia not only dollars, but they earn Russia influence because Russia, in the dead of winter, has turned off the valves. Russia's state-controlled gas company, Gazprom, threatened to cut off supplies to Ukraine earlier this month, as it did during the winters of 2006 and 2009. Gazprom has stated that it is preparing to double the price Ukraine pays for its natural gas, which could cripple the country's already weak economy.

Now, we have a powerful tool to counter this pressure, one that is just waiting to be used, and that is our own energy reserves. We must remove restrictions on the export of U.S. crude oil and natural gas into Eastern Europe. We have, in fact, a letter to the Speaker of the House from the heads of state of Poland, of the Czech Republic, of Slovakia, of Hungary, asking us—asking us—to direct resources, to sell resources.

Listen, at the end of the day, if we do this, we end the flaring of gas here in the United States because of the glut. We are able to help our balance of payments. It will help to reduce our deficits. It increases Russia's deficits, frankly. It produces jobs here in the United States. But it comes at a time when Vladimir Putin has a grip on the necks of the decisionmakers in Eastern Europe with respect to his power on monopoly over gas.

Lifting, frankly, these self-imposed sanctions on ourselves in terms of not exporting our excess gas would not only boost the U.S. economy and create American jobs, as I indicated, but would reduce the energy revenues that comprise 52 percent of the budget for the military and the government in Russia. We must break Putin's energy grip over Ukraine and Eastern Europe. This is a strategic issue.

I am pleased, by the way, to have worked closely with Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL of New York and with all of the members of the committee to produce this strong, effective, and much-needed bipartisan bill, and I look forward to its passage today and to working with our Senate colleagues to have the President sign the bill into law as soon as possible.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC., March 26, 2014.

Hon. ED ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing with respect to H.R. 4278, the ''Ukraine Support Act,'' which the Committee on Foreign Affairs ordered reported favorably on March 25, 2014. As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions in H.R. 4278 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I agree to discharge our Committee from further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 4278 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our 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 asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 4278, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration of H.R. 4278.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC., March 26, 2014.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R 4278, the Ukraine Support Act, and for agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of that bill. The suspension text contains edits to portions of the bill within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary that were requested by your committee.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this resolution or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 4278 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the resolution. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on the Judiciary as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC., March 26, 2014.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: On March 25, 2014, the Committee on Foreign Affairs considered H.R. 4278, the Ukraine Support Act, and ordered it, as amended, to be reported favorably to the House. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee on Financial Services concerning provisions of the bill that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction both before and since your markup, I agree not to seek a sequential referral of the measure to my committee so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor.

The Committee on Financial Services takes this action with our mutual understanding that, by foregoing a request for a sequential referral of H.R. 4278, as amended, at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may continue to address any issues that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction. Our 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 any such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 4278, as amended, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in your committee's report to accompany the legislation and/or in the Congressional Record during floor consideration thereof.

Sincerely,

JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC., March 26, 2014.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HENSARLING: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R 4278, the Ukraine Support Act, and for agreeing to forgo a sequential referral request on that bill. The suspension text contains edits to portions of the bill within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Financial Services that were requested by your committee.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Financial Services, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this resolution or similar legislation in the future. I

would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 4278 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the resolution. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on the Financial Services as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC., March 26, 2014.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing concerning H.R. 4278, the ''Ukraine Support Act,'' which was favorably reported out of your Committee on March 25, 2014.

Given that certain provisions in the bill are within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means, I appreciate that you have addressed these provisions in response to the Committee's concerns. As a result, in order to expedite floor consideration of the bill, the Committee on Ways and Means will forgo action on H.R. 4278. Further, the Committee will not oppose the bill's consideration on the suspension calendar, based on our understanding that you will work with us as the legislative process moves forward to ensure that our concerns continue to be addressed. This is also being done with the understanding that it does not in any way prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter, confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 4278, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,

DAVE CAMP,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC., March 26, 2014.

Hon. DAVE CAMP,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CAMP: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R 4278, the Ukraine Support Act, and for agreeing to forgo a sequential referral request on that bill. The suspension text contains edits to the bill related to the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Ways and Means that were requested by your committee.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this resolution or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 4278 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the resolution. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on the Ways and Means as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

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

I rise in strong support of H.R. 4278, the Ukraine Support Act.

Let me begin by thanking the chairman of our Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. ROYCE, for his strong leadership on Ukraine. As always, he is working with us in a bipartisan and constructive manner on this very important and timely bill. I am very pleased to be the lead Democratic cosponsor. I would also like to thank my other Democratic and Republican colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee for their important contributions.

The United States has long been a steadfast supporter of a democratic, prosperous, and independent Ukraine, and with the people of Ukraine now in dire need of assistance and under imminent threat, there has never been a more critical moment to show our support.

President Putin's invasion of Crimea is a flagrant violation of international law and Russia's commitments to its neighbor. The phony and illegal referendum Putin orchestrated at the barrel of a gun has resulted in the first outright annexation of territory in Europe since the end of World War II. And now Putin is amassing troops on Ukraine's border, threatening to seize more Ukrainian territory and incite further violence and conflict.

Putin's destabilizing and dangerous moves threaten not only Ukraine, but other states in the region, including Moldova and Georgia and, indeed, all of Europe. The United States, our European partners, and the entire international community must take a stand against Putin's naked aggression.

This legislation reaffirms our strong support for the people of Ukraine at this critical time. It authorizes assistance for Ukraine as it attempts to right its struggling economy, increase energy security, strengthen civil society, and prepare for democratic elections this spring. It supports Ukraine's efforts to recover missing assets, to bolster the rule of law, and to professionalize its law enforcement. It supports additional broadcasting to Ukraine—and Chairman ROYCE has been a champion of that—and other countries in the region to counter the dangerous and hateful propaganda coming from the Kremlin and its media outlets. And it endorses the deployment of significant numbers of international monitors throughout Ukraine to help reduce tensions and ensure the security of all Ukrainians.

The legislation also sends a clear message to Putin and his cronies that their landgrab and reckless actions will have serious consequences. Specifically, it supplements the President's efforts to sanction those responsible for violating Ukraine's sovereignty and international integrity, looting Ukraine's economy, and violating human rights in Ukraine.

And here I would like to applaud President Obama for imposing measures which have already impacted Putin's inner circle, for taking the lead in suspending Russia's participation in the G8, and for rallying support and coordinating actions with our European partners and others throughout the world.

Finally, the bill expresses support for continuing U.S. security assistance to Ukraine and reaffirms our commitment to the security of NATO, the security of our NATO partners in Eastern and Central Europe.

Mr. Speaker, the coming days, weeks, and months will be very difficult for Ukraine. Its leaders must continue the process of reconciliation and reach out to all regions of the country. They must scrupulously respect minority and human rights, and they must make the hard decisions and take the difficult steps that will return their country to political and economic health. And they must do all of this in the face of opposition and likely provocations from Putin and his cronies.

But as they do so, they and the people of Ukraine should know that they have our support. By passing this bill, we are making clear that the United States stands with Ukraine, that we are committed to helping its people build a more democratic, prosperous, secure, and just state for themselves and their children.

You know, if we continue to work with Ukraine and continue to help Ukraine and turn them westward, rather than eastward, then Putin will have lost. He may have a landgrab in Crimea, but he will lose the rest of Ukraine. And we should be doing everything possible to make sure that our European allies are working closely with Ukraine, offering them the incentives they need so that they will look westward and not eastward.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

Finally, I want to say, foreign policy should be bipartisan whenever possible. I think this is bipartisanship as its best.

□ 1045

We send a clear message to the people of Ukraine that the United States stands with them. It is not a Republican or a Democratic stand. It is an American stand, and I am proud to be part of it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), our respected majority leader.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman, the gentleman from California.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of the Ukraine Support Act. Vladimir Putin's recent military invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea

stand in direct violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and international law. His aggression may only continue unless we in America, along with our allies, respond with strength.

Newspaper reports indicate that Putin may not be content with swallowing Crimea whole and that he is now amassing troops on the border with eastern Ukraine and may soon have his eyes on Moldova.

The eyes of the world are on the United States and our EU and NATO partners. Adversaries and allies around the world are watching to see how we respond to this outrageous provocation, to see whether we mean it when we say Putin's actions are unacceptable.

It is vitally important that the United States, in conjunction with our EU and NATO allies, send an unmistakable signal that this aggression will not be tolerated. Together we must be prepared to exact a significant cost for Russia's behavior and that Mr. Putin's actions will be met with the firmest of resolve.

This bill is a first step towards supporting the Ukrainians and our Central and Eastern European partners and imposing truly significant costs on Moscow—but it is only a first step. We must fundamentally reassess our assumptions about Russia and acknowledge that Putin himself scrapped the administration's ''reset'' policy a long time ago. We need a new strategy that understands Putin for who he is, not who we wish him to be.

We need a new grand strategy. We need a foreign policy that stands up for our allies and stands up to our adversaries. We need to prioritize defense in our budget so that we maintain a military that can respond promptly to contingencies around the world and that instills fear in our enemies while reassuring our allies.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this bill, modest though it may be, will prove to be the first step on a long march to restore America's defenses and alliances. Now, more than ever, the threats to the very fabric of the international system require an America that leads.

I want to thank very much the gentleman from California, Chairman ROYCE, and Ranking Member ENGEL and the rest of the Committee on Foreign Affairs for their bipartisan work and for all of their efforts on this issue. I urge my colleagues in the House to support our friends in Ukraine by passing this bill.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY), a very distinguished member of our committee.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend. I also congratulate the ranking member, Mr. ENGEL, and the chairman, Mr. ROYCE, for their bipartisan leadership on this critical, critical resolution.

Mr. Speaker, apparently, once a KGB agent, always a KGB agent. Mr. Putin seems to have learned nothing from history other than that there is power at the end of the barrel of a gun. To cite the fact that there are Russian speakers in Crimea as a rationale for one of the most audacious power grabs of the 21st century—in Europe, no less—forgets history.

Let us not forget that Crimea was settled by Stalin when he expelled and executed the native Tatars, and this recent so-called referendum in Crimea was also done at the end of the barrel of a gun.

Russian interests were never threatened in the Crimea after the revolution in Kiev. The new government in Kiev never abrogated the treaty that allowed Russia naval privileges through 2042. The Ukrainians didn't occupy military stations in Crimea and around the region. It was the other way around.

For the United States and its allies to allow this naked aggression to go unaddressed would be truly an abrogation of our moral responsibility and would be to turn our backs on the very lessons we should have learned from the 20th century's tragic history.

Mr. Speaker, we need to stop talking about the he-better-not-go-further argument. I am stuck at Crimea, and I hope my colleagues are, too. It is wrong. It cannot be allowed to stand, and we must make him pay a price.

The difference between now and Stalin's time is that his economy is integrated into the global economy. The ruble will fall. The stock market in Russia will pay a price, and investment will suffer because we will help make it so unless he relents, until they pay a price that is so great—systematic and comprehensive—that he will understand that we no longer operate by the rule of the jungle in Europe or, indeed, anywhere else on this planet, not with our blessing and not with our apology.

So I strongly support the legislation before us and urge my colleagues to join with all of us in telling Mr. Putin we will not stand idly by with history doomed to repeat itself.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Ukraine Support Act. I want to thank my friends and colleagues, Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL, for introducing this comprehensive legislation to support Ukraine in its urgent effort to meet its current crisis, including by building up its democratic institutions.

Mr. Speaker, Russia's landgrab in Crimea violates the core principles of several bilateral and multilateral agreements and treaties between Ukraine and Russia, the Budapest Memorandum, and the United Nations Charter, as well as the Helsinki Final Act. This legislation includes strong sanctions against Russians directly responsible for the aggression.

H.R. 4278 also authorizes targeted sanctions against Ukrainians involved in undermining the democratic processes and provides assistance to the Ukrainian Government for identifying and recovering stolen assets. It is, after all, these criminal officials, including and especially Yanukovych and his cronies, who have so harmed the Ukrainian people and placed the country in the vulnerable position which Russia has exploited.

Another key provision of the bill provides support for Ukraine's democracy and civil society; and I want to here recognize the importance of supporting, as well, the faith-based groups and organizations that played such a prominent role, particularly on the humanitarian side, in supporting the movement for democracy and the rule of law.

The Ukrainian democracy movement is, in large part, a religious movement. Orthodox and Catholic clergy, for example, were prominent in the protests, and the drama of priests carrying icons confronting soldiers became as much a symbol of the democratization movement as anything else. And, again, when people were wounded and when people were being dragged away, it was the clergy that tried to step in to mitigate the violence against them.

Let me also point out a Catholic News Service article that just hit the wire that points out that members of the Ukrainian Catholic Church are fleeing Crimea to escape threats of arrest and property seizures.

Father Milchakovskyi, a parish rector in Crimea, said:

> The situation remains very serious, and we don't know what will happen—the new government here is portraying us all as nationalists and extremists.

The article also says:

> Officials from Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB, had called him in for questioning about his community and to ask whether or not he ''recognized the new order.''

He pointed out that one priest in particular was actually beaten by Russian forces. And, again, Members will recall, and I remember during the 1980s when I first came here, how so many within the church, including the orthodox church, were beaten and sent to the gulag because of their religious faith. This could be the harbinger of a new wave of repression against people of faith. The Ukrainian Catholic Church, by way of reminder, was one of those churches that was outlawed during Soviet times, and now we see the same kind of repetition of that kind of repression.

This legislation is a clear step in the right direction. No piece of legislation will do it all. We have to appeal to the Russians to stop this, but, again, to cease their persecution of people in the Crimea.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the

gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend, the ranking member, Mr. ENGEL from New York, and I thank Mr. ROYCE, the chairman of the committee, for bringing this bill to the floor and working in a bipartisan fashion to effect an objective that I strongly support. I thank both of them for their work.

Mr. Speaker, the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine is unacceptable and a gross violation of international law. I agree with President Obama that Russia is acting from a position of weakness, however. Strong nations do not invade and annex territory from their smaller neighbors by force, and strong nations do not suppress the free expression of ideas and the voices of dissent within their own society. Those are the hallmarks not of a great nation but of an insecure bully.

Great nations are those that stand together to reaffirm the principles of liberty and international order. Great nations are those that commit to peaceful diplomacy while protecting free and open debate among our citizens.

The American people continue to stand with the people of Ukraine, Mr. Speaker, because we believe they have a right to join the nations of the world that are free and able to shape their own future. That is why, through this bill, we pledge our support as the new government in Kiev works to stabilize its economy, provide security to its citizens, and ensure that all Ukrainians are afforded the opportunities that come with vibrant, democratic institutions and basic freedoms. That is what this bill offers the people of Ukraine.

What it offers President Putin and his associates is an opportunity to end their misguided, unjustified, and the illegal incursion into Ukraine's internal affairs, because it affords them a choice, Mr. Speaker: adhere to international law and end their aggression or face increasingly punitive sanctions that will further isolate Russia from the global community.

The one item missing from this otherwise strong bill, unfortunately, is ratification of IMF quota reform, and I hope the House will take action on that piece soon.

However, this is a good bill. We ought to support this bill. We ought to pass this bill and send Mr. Putin a clear message that the United States Congress and the Nation we represent will not stand for Russia's actions and that we are ready to help Ukraine reach for the future it so richly deserves.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this legislation, and I realize that I am a lone voice—or almost a lone voice—in this discussion today.

I see this legislation as a bipartisan green light to reigniting the cold war. Unfortunately, many of my friends and colleagues, both colleagues today and my friends from the time when I spent in the Reagan White House, 7 years, many of these people feel that the cold war is not over, that it never did end. They are more comfortable with treating Russia as if it were still under Communist rule. Well, Putin is not a Communist leader. Putin is a nationalist who loves his country and he is looking out for the national interests of his country. For us to try to demonize him and to try to suggest that he is doing this as he did in the cold war and he is still KGB, et cetera, is not doing the cause of peace any good.

This is what started this whole slide in the wrong direction toward the type of confrontation we are having today. In Ukraine, a democratically elected President was removed from power, and that was a democratically elected President who is more inclined towards better relations with Russia. He was removed from power. And then the Russian Government, under Mr. Putin, decided to ensure the people of Crimea the right to self-determination. Because even Secretary of State Kerry has verified and testified before our committee that the people of Crimea obviously want to be part of Russia, this is not a power grab.

□ 1100

This is defending their right to self determination, and certainly the people of Crimea have the right to make that determination just as the people of Kosovo had their right to leave Serbia behind.

Our military action there to try to protect the right of self determination of the Kosovars, it cost many, many lives. This Russian military move, with all this power grab, et cetera, has resulted in the loss of one life. That is in stark contrast to when we bombed Belgrade, we bombed Serbia.

No, we should not permit ourselves to reignite a cold war. We should make sure that we realize that the actions we are taking here suggesting the United States must rush in and be the arbiter in every one of these type of conflicts is always stretching our budget. But in this particular bill, we are going to put our name on a loan of $800 billion to a country that we are going have to borrow the money from China to get.

The United States can no longer afford to right every wrong in the world and be the arbiter. In this case we would be arbitrating in the wrong direction.

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

Mr. Speaker, part of our problem here is with President Putin's definition of what is the Russian Nation in his speech to the Duma. When he says the Russian Nation is divided by borders, he is sending a message that, with respect not just to Crimea but other areas throughout Europe, Russia may be staking a claim.

Here is the difficulty. In Crimea, yes, the population today is majority ethnic Russian, but there was a time when, before Joe Stalin moved a wide segment of the Tatars population into Siberia and before the forced collectivization, there was a time when the majority population was very different than it is today. Fifty-six percent of that ethnic group perished. But this is a problem that we also have in Eastern Europe and in eastern and southern Ukraine, because you had some 8 million Ukrainians also perish during Stalin's rule, and ethnic Russians came into that area as a consequence.

The thing we need to remember is that it is, in fact, the Russian-speaking population in the east, as well as the Ukrainians speaking in the west, that voted for independence for Ukraine, that voted strongly to have a separate state. And if this issue is allowed to stand without the world responding, the question is: Is that argument then made in Latvia and Estonia? Is that argument then made in Latvia and Estonia? Is that argument made in all of the former Russian states?

I do not think in any way this is comparable to Kosovo. In Kosovo, NATO responded to a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing by former Yugoslavian forces. In Crimea, Russia attempted to justify its actions by fabricating the myth of widespread violence against the ethnic Russian population, even going as far as to equate it to the bloodshed occurring in Syria. Clearly, this is not true. We know it is not true.

In terms of the election itself, opponents were silenced. International monitors were barred. Crimean Tatars themselves boycotted the very election. Voters were not given the option of preserving Crimea's current status within Ukraine. Independence and de facto independence were the only options, and the bogus vote there was also unnecessary because the Ukrainian Government had made it clear that it was willing to discuss increased autonomy for Crimea.

Now, here is the problem going forward. We know the view taken internationally on this subject. The U.N. Security Council condemned Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, and Russia stood alone—stood absolutely alone in this case—because even Ukrainians themselves have gone to the sites of the Russian media-reported attacks against ethnic Russian minorities to show that that is not occurring. That is, in fact, propaganda. We can't let this stand.

One of the other things we are doing in this bill is improving our broadcasting into Ukraine and the region to dispel these myths and spread the truth about the situation there.

So I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the managers of this legislation, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, for their leadership and for their commitment, as I acknowledge the other body as well.

This morning, a bright announcement came from Mr. Putin that he was drawing Russians to a program of exercise in the name of labor and defense. Someone said it is reminiscent of past history, when other despots drew their Nation together in massive public exercises to show the world that they were not going to be part of the world order.

I believe in peace. I believe that we should be engaged, that diplomacy is right. I also don't believe in condemnation of a Nation purely for its ideological disagreement.

In this instance, it is important for the United States to make a public stand. As a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Exchange, meeting with Europeans over the years, I know that they are proud of the democracy that they have maintained since the horrors of World War II.

Today, the United States, with the passage of this legislation, and ultimately hopefully the signing by the President, will tell the world that the United States stands firmly with its own democratic principles. But the people of Ukraine, those in Kiev and places around, will still have the knowledge that America stands by it economically, with loan guarantees, but it also stands against a despot who has illegally moved into a sovereign Nation, with no provocation, undermining the military base of Ukraine. So I would ask my colleagues to join against a despot and for a people and support the underlying legislation.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time, and I also thank the chairman and the ranking member for bringing this legislation to the floor in a very speedy and efficient manner.

I will also say I have great respect for my friend from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER). He knows a lot about foreign affairs, but we disagree on what the evidence shows in this particular matter.

Mr. Speaker, Mark Twain once said that, ''History doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme.'' Well, Russia is quite the poet these days.

In 2008, Russia invaded Georgia and confiscated one-third of that Nation's territory. The world watched, complained a little bit. The world moved on. There were no consequences. And the Russians, Mr. Speaker, are still there. Again, second verse, same as the first.

The ''Napoleon of Siberia'' has invaded Ukraine and seized Crimea. Putin is bent on establishing a Soviet-style empire and allegedly uniting Russian-speaking people throughout the world. Well, who knows who his next target will be. It could be our friends in Moldova, the rest of Ukraine, or Estonia.

Russia has been able to maintain dominance over the region because of its vast energy sources, especially natural gas. Six countries in Europe rely 100 percent on Russia for their natural gas. Russia uses gas as a political and economic weapon to manipulate these countries.

I was in Ukraine in winter when Russia turned off the gas for political reasons. It was cold. It was dark. This bill helps disarm that hostage tactic. It includes my amendment that commits the U.S. to helping Ukraine use American natural gas.

There must be consequences for the bully, Putin, for invading other Nations like Ukraine. Justice requires there be consequences. Mr. Speaker, justice is what we do.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire about how much time each of us has?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). The gentleman from New York has 8 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from California's time has expired.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from California be allowed to control 3 minutes of my remaining time.

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

There was no objection.

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

What we are doing this morning is the Congress at its best. What we are doing this morning is standing up to a bully and telling him that his actions will not stand. What we are doing is saying that in the 21st century it is no longer acceptable for dictators to invade other countries.

What we are saying to the people of Ukraine is that we stand behind you, we are with you, we haven't forgotten you, and we are going to do everything possible to make you whole again. We are going to do everything possible to let you know the West wants to partner with you. We are going to do everything possible to stand up for freedom and democracy with you.

I think that is a very noble cause. It is not pie in the sky. No one is advocating a war with boots on the ground against Russia, but we are advocating that there have to be some standards in the world.

If we let Putin get away with this, then it sends a green light to Putin that he can continue to do this and to every other despot and dictator around the world that they can do whatever they like and the world is just indifferent or too afraid to act.

I think this is an opportunity, and I think that this is a time when one day we will be able to say to our grandchildren that we acted together.

I want to again commend Chairman ROYCE for working with me in a bipartisan fashion. We will be going to Ukraine together in a few short weeks to show the Ukrainian people that America stands with them.

I urge my colleagues again to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER), a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this important bipartisan bill. I commend Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for bringing this measure forward.

Today's legislation makes clear that, as a Nation, we speak with one voice regarding Russia's aggression.

The situation in Ukraine is undoubtedly complex. The history between Crimea and Russia dates back centuries. Close to 60 percent of the population identifies as ethnic Russians.

Several facts are clear: Russia has massed troops and perpetrated a breach of international law with its unwarranted aggression.

The elections in Crimea took place under an illegal occupation. It did not resemble anything close to a real election. Consequently, the results should not and cannot be recognized.

Lastly, there is little doubt that if the world does not act, Russia's territorial aggression will expand and continue. Whatever the complexities, this invasion of a sovereign country is not justified, period.

Today's bill makes clear America will not tolerate Russia's territorial aggression in Ukraine or elsewhere. I urge my colleagues to support it.

□ 1115

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee.

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill.

As Ukraine is fighting for its independence and the people of Ukraine are fighting to preserve and to deepen their democracy, we must stand squarely with them. It has been said here, including by the majority leader, that this is a first step.

I would like to make very clear, we really should be taking, in this bill, another step; we should be providing, in this bill, as was proposed in the Senate and by many of us, some assistance to make sure that the IMF can perform its fullest role.

That was the preference of President Obama. He made it clear we should act, the U.S. We should also be able to help the IMF to act as fully and effectively as possible.

So I think, today, instead of anybody here coming and criticizing the President, they should essentially be supporting him in his efforts to have the fullest array of assistance to Ukrainian democracy.

If this is only the first step, let's take some additional steps and stand together on a bipartisan basis, instead of at times, I think, taking partisan shots verbally at the President of the United States.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the esteemed ranking member of New York (Mr. ENGEL), a dear friend, for yielding time in support of the Ukraine Support Act, H.R. 4278, and for his leadership from the time we traveled to Ukraine together well over a decade ago; and to Congressman ROYCE, the chairman of the committee, to reaffirm America's strong support for liberty and the people of Ukraine at this really critical time in world history and the history of Central and Eastern Europe.

The assistance that is contemplated here is in the form of a loan guarantee and will aid Ukraine's efforts to recover its own missing assets to pay the money back. Ukraine is fully capable of earning its way forward. It is already the third largest grain exporter in the world, so this is nothing that can't be repaid.

In addition, the bill authorizes $10 million for international broadcasting to Ukraine. I can guarantee you—I did an interview with Voice of America about a week ago—I received emails from people in Ukraine. They are waiting to hear the song of liberty.

Let us sing it loudly by passing this legislation quickly on a bipartisan basis and stand for freedom when it matters most.

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

In closing, let me, again, say what a pleasure it is to work with Chairman ROYCE on a bipartisan basis. You can see, again, strong bipartisan support for this bill.

Ms. KAPTUR didn't mention that she was cochair of the Ukrainian Caucus. We have Members on both sides of the aisle all standing together to say the United States stands with the people of Ukraine. Please vote ''yes.''

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

This is not a new cold war. President Reagan ended the cold war. The way he did that, frankly, was by leading, but also with a strategy which drove down the price of oil and gas, which was the stranglehold, which not only Russia had over Eastern Europe, but also funded the ability of the former Soviet Union militarily to carry out an expansion program.

Today, you have the circumstance where President Putin relies almost solely—70 percent of the exports, 52 percent of the budget, as I indicated—from a monopoly position on oil and gas.

That is why I think it is very important that we understand what the polls and what the Hungarians understood when they exported 2 billion cubic yards of gas last year to Ukraine in order to try to keep the ability of Russia from manipulating the situation into leading to the very chaos that was brought about.

We need to understand, when the U.S.-EU annual summit just occurred and the EU asked us to be part of a program to ship gas into that market in order to offset this monopoly control and pricing by Russia, that we should be part of this. This is part of this bill.

Also part of the bill is the important consequence of communicating to the people in that region and offsetting the propaganda that Russia right now is sending into the country.

We address that issue, as well, in this legislation, as well as good governance issues, and the steps that are needed in order to reform the economy inside Ukraine in order to set up the rule of law, independent courts.

The polls are on the ground working on this issue right now. The United States needs to support that effort. This sends one last message that, if you are in the business of helping to invade a country, there will be consequences.

I urge an ''aye'' vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4278, the "Ukraine Support Act." I support this legislation because I stand in solidarity with the freedom loving people of Ukraine, who are under siege from Russian encroachment.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4278 authorizes $70 million in aid to Ukraine, including $50 million for democracy and civil society efforts.

The bill also codifies and expands sanctions imposed this month by the Obama Administration against certain Russian officials and calls on President Obama to sanction Russian officials, corporations and those engaged in the Russian arms sector who have undermined the Ukrainian government or committed human rights abuses. The President is also authorized to examine whether Russia has violated a 1988 arms treaty and permits him to freeze assets and deny visas.

Specifically, the bill authorizes $50 million for the President to provide assistance to support democracy and strengthen civil society in Ukraine. This assistance is to be used to improve transparency, rule of law, and anti-corruption efforts; strengthen political organizations; and protect independent media as Ukraine prepares for free and fair elections in May.

Additionally, up to $10 million is authorized for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America to increase broadcasts into eastern Ukraine (including Crimea), Moldova and other nearby ethnic Russian communities. The broadcasts should, in particular, counter misinformation from Russia-supported news outlets.

In addition to this direct aid, the bill also supports the people of Ukraine in the following ways:

1. Encourages the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) to prioritize investments in Ukraine;

2. Authorizes $8 million to help Ukraine develop an independent judiciary and eliminate human rights abuses by law enforcement authorities;

3. Encourages increased U.S. security cooperation among NATO states in Central and Eastern Europe through military training, exercises and the exchange of defense articles, and directs the Secretary of State to report to Congress within 30 days of enactment with a review of U.S. security assistance to that country;

4. Expresses the sense of Congress that the administration should provide expedited assistance to the Ukrainian government to identify and recover assets stolen from the government or linked to corruption by former officials, including former President Viktor Yanukovych; and

5. Offsets the cost of assistance to Ukraine by reducing the $1.5 billion authorized for Pakistan in the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009 by $70 million.

That is why I strongly support the codification of three Presidential executive orders issued in March sanctioning individuals involved in the violence in Ukraine or who undermine the independence, sovereignty, or territorial or economic integrity of Ukraine. Such sanctions could include the seizure of financial assets, the denial of visas, and other penalties.

The sanctions could be ended if the President certifies to Congress that Ukrainian sovereignty, independence or territorial integrity is not being violated by Russia or any other state actor, or after Jan. 1, 2020, if the President certifies that their termination is in the national security interest of the United States.

Finally, the bill requires the President, within 30 days of enactment and within 180 days thereafter for at least two years, to report to Congress on senior Russian political figures who are engaged in such activity.

It also requires the President, along identical timelines, to report to Congress on foreign financial institutions (especially Russian banks) to determine whether they are involved in the confiscation of Ukrainian assets; money laundering, terrorist or proliferation financing, or actively helping to skirt sanctions; or helping to annex Crimea.

The bill expresses the sense of Congress that the President should expand the list of Russian officials—currently at 18—sanctioned for gross human rights violations under the Magnitsky Act of 2012.

Mr. Speaker, it is right that the civilized world, led by the United States, opposes aggression and the violation of territorial sovereignty by the Putin regime.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to pass H.R. 4278.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 4278, the Ukraine

Support Act. One of the many important initiatives included in this legislation is language urging the President to greatly expand the list of Russian officials and others who have been sanctioned for gross human rights violations. Until this past week, only eighteen had been sanctioned. This is unacceptable. After the recent actions of the Russian Federation, we must expand this list beyond those involved in the death of the Russian anti-corruption lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, whose imprisonment and subsequent death was the impetus for the creation of these sanctions. I am glad to hear that the President just sanctioned 20 additional individuals, freezing their assets and barring U.S. travel. However, more must be done.

Others who deserve to be held accountable for their human rights abuses include militant anti-Westerner Dmitry Kiselyov—head of the Russian government-owned news agency and called the "Kremlin's New Chief Propagandist" by the Moscow Times—who was recently sanctioned by the European Union, and Maxim Martsinkevich, head of Neo-Nazi extremist group "Occupy Pedophilia" which has engaged in kidnapping and torture. There are others who are allies and friends of Vladimir Putin whom the Administration seems to have avoided placing on the list to avoid Russian retaliation—but it is clear a policy of appeasement has done nothing to deter Putin's government.

Last month, the State Department released its 2013 county report on human rights practices in Russia, which documented widespread human rights abuses under the Russian government. The report found that "[t]he government continued its crackdown on dissent that began after Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency," seeking "to harass, pressure, discredit, and/or prosecute individuals and entities that had voiced criticism of the government." It depicted a suppressive environment where "law enforcement personnel engaged in torture, abuse, and violence to coerce confessions from suspects," politically motivated disappearances continued to occur, and conditions in prisons could be harsh or life-threatening. The State Department noted that Russia had adopted several laws discriminating against LGBT individuals, continued to prosecute some religious minorities, and found some authorities "discriminated against ethnic minorities, arbitrarily detaining thousands of migrant workers amid a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment. Laws, actions, and official rhetoric restricting the rights of the LGBT community, migrants, and other minorities coincided with a marked increase in violent attacks against these groups."

This scathing report makes clear there are more Russian individuals who belong on the sanctioned list. I strongly urge the President to hold these human rights abusers accountable for their crimes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4278, 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. ROYCE. 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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 24 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1131

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING) at 11 o'clock and 31 minutes a.m.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 32 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1207

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) at 12 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.

PROTECTING ACCESS TO MEDICARE ACT OF 2014

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 4302) to amend the Social Security Act to extend Medicare payments to physicians and other provisions of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

UKRAINE SUPPORT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4278) to support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are 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. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 399, nays 19, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 148]

YEAS—399

Aderholt
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
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
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
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)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matheson
Matsui
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud

Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (IN)

NAYS—19

Amash
Bentivolio
Broun (GA)
Burgess
DesJarlais
Duncan (TN)
Gibson
Grayson
Jones
Labrador
Massie
Mulvaney
O'Rourke
Posey
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Stockman
Yoho
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—13

Amodei
Butterfield
Campbell
Coble
DelBene
Gutiérrez
Honda
McCarthy (NY)
Miller, Gary
Negrete McLeod
Rush
Schwartz
Wenstrup

□ 1233

Messrs. ROKITA and YOHO changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. PALAZZO, McNERNEY, and WEBER of Texas changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

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.

Stated for:

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes today. I would like the record to show that, had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall vote 148.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, March 26th, 2014 and Thursday, March 27th, 2014 I was unable to be in Washington, DC and vote on the legislative business during these two days. Unfortunately, the tragic mudslide in Snohomish County, Washington required me to return to my district to help my constituents in the aftermath of this disaster.

I would now like to submit how I would have voted had I been present.

I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 142: On Ordering the Previous Question for consideration of H. Res. 524, a resolution providing for consideration of H.R. 1459, the Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act. Had I been present I would have voted ''no.''

I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 143: On Adoption of H. Res. 524, a resolution providing for consideration of H.R. 1459, a resolution providing for consideration of H.R. 1459, the Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act. Had I been present I would have voted ''no.''

I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 144: On motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1228, Corporal Justin D. Ross Post Office Building in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Had I been present I would have voted ''yes.''

I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 145: On Agreeing to the Tsongas Amendment No. 3 to H.R. 1459, the Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act. Had I been present I would have voted ''yes.''

I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 146: On the Motion to Recommit with Instructions H.R. 1459, the Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act. Had I been present I would have voted ''yes.''

I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 147: On Passage of H.R. 1459, the Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act. Had I been present I would have voted ''no.''

I was unable to vote on rollcall No. 148: On motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4278, Ukraine Support Act. Had I been present I would have voted ''yes.''

□ 1245

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of inquiring of the majority leader the schedule for the week to come, and I am pleased to yield to my friend, Mr. CANTOR, the majority leader.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland, the Democratic whip, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday the House is not in session. On Tuesday, the House will meet at noon for morning-hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m. On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning-hour and noon for legislative business. On Friday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business. Last votes of the week are expected no later than 3 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a few suspensions next week, a complete list of which will be announced by close of business tomorrow. In addition, the House will consider an important bill next week to address the middle class squeeze by making sure that government policies do not provide incentives for employers to cut hours for their employees. H.R. 2575, the Save American Workers Act, sponsored by Representative TODD YOUNG of Indiana, will protect hardworking Americans from losing up to 25 percent of their wages as a direct result of ObamaCare's 30-hour rule.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I expect the House to consider the first of three budget process reform bills next week to help reduce out-of-control spending and improve accountability to the taxpayers. Representative TOM PRICE's Pro-Growth Budgeting Act, H.R. 1874, will require CBO to provide detailed information on the economic impacts of major legislation as a supplement to CBO cost estimates.

With that, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that information.

The gentleman released an agenda memo about a week ago and talked about a budget coming to the floor of the House of Representatives. My understanding is that the budget will be marked up in committee next week, and my presumption is when we come back, the budget will be on the floor. Is that correct? And if the gentleman can give me maybe some week that it will be on the floor, if not the day.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and he is correct. The Budget chairman, Mr. RYAN, intends to hold a markup next week in his committee, and the expectation is, once that markup occurs next week, that we will have the budget on the floor the following week.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for those comments.

Further, it is my understanding, Mr. Leader, that the budget number that the committee will mark to is the budget number that was included in the Ryan-Murray agreement that was adopted by the Congress and signed by the President at $1.014 trillion in discretionary spending. Is that accurate?

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman, that is accurate.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I appreciate that that is being honored. Can the gentleman tell me whether or not the firewall that is also included in the Ryan-Murray agreement will be honored as well? The firewall, just an explanation, and I know the majority leader knows, but the firewall between discretionary defense spending and discretionary nondefense spending.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman, I have not had discussion with the chairman on that particular issue. I am aware of the gentleman's concern, and I think the gentleman represents his caucus in the desire, unfortunately, to limit the defense spending. I think the question is probably aimed at the fact that we have differences on that because, given what is going on in the world right now, I feel very strongly for the need

for American military power and our ability to project that, not always necessarily to use it, but necessary in our diplomatic role as well, so I don't have an answer to the gentleman on that and refer him to the Budget chair. I am glad to engage in any conversation with him going forward.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

Just to make it clear, as I know he would want me to do: I am opposed to the sequester because I think the sequester damages our national security and domestic investments. Frankly, although the 1.014 number is not the sequester number, as the gentleman knows, the following year will be the sequester number because the agreement only lasts for 2 years. My own view is that the number that we are marking to in 2015 is not substantive enough, not sufficient funds to fund the kind of national security that we need in this country, so I am in agreement with the gentleman, but it is a direct consequence, in my view, of the fiscal policies that we have been pursuing. So I want to say to my friend, the majority leader, Mr. Speaker, that we on this side—certainly me for 33 years, I have been a very strong supporter of a robust national security because I believe that is essential if we are going to maintain freedom around the world, as well as safety here at home. I know the gentleman and I share that view, and I appreciate his view on that.

Unless he wants to respond, I will go to another issue.

As you know, we filed a discharge petition on H.R. 15, which is the comprehensive immigration bill that we have introduced that reflects, we think, a fix of a broken system, which the majority leader has made clear he shares the view that the system is broken. We would hope that that bill could be brought to the floor. We would hope that at least 218 Members would sign that. We have approximately 235 Members who have said publicly to the press and to the public that they are for comprehensive immigration reform. We would hope that that would lead them to sign the discharge petition so we in fact could bring that bill to the floor.

Does the gentleman have any idea when or if some immigration reform legislation will be brought to this floor so that we can deal with a system that is obviously causing a great deal of difficulty in our country and is, in fact, a broken system?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman, and he knows and he and I have spoken, that most of our conference feels strongly that the existing system is broken. We have got to do something about maintaining the enforcement and implementation of the law. We have to do something about the antiquated system of legal immigration to address the needs of our country.

The problem has been, Mr. Speaker, that there is a serious deterioration in the trust factor with what is going on in terms of the White House and its execution and implementation of the laws. I recall, Mr. Speaker, a prior conversation that my friend, the Democratic whip, and I have had on this floor about the trust factor. I in one instance even indicated to the gentleman that the comprehensive health care law that was passed, now in the vernacular known as ObamaCare, is an example of where we have seen that the White House has by whim, seemingly, chosen to either waive provisions, extend deadlines without consultation with Congress, seemingly without awareness of what the law says. That is not a good way to operate. It is not something that increases the confidence and trust of the American people. So I would say to the gentleman, there is no interest in picking up a comprehensive bill like that if we can't trust that once the law is set, that the White House is going to necessarily implement the law as it stands.

So I am sorry to say to the gentleman that the situation of trust is how it is, but perhaps he could do some good by talking to the White House and telling the White House the law is the law, and for their unilateral actions taking place and failing to implement the law is a very troubling thing for a lot of us and a lot of the constituents that we represent.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, when I ask this question we usually do change the subject to get on the Affordable Care Act. There is hardly any subject that motivates my friends on the other side of the aisle more to say something than the Affordable Care Act.

If the gentleman believes that trust is the issue and that we can't trust the President to do any of the laws that we pass, then we ought to just stop doing things. As a matter of fact, that is just about what we have done, Mr. Speaker. Maybe that is the strategy—to pass message bills with no expectation that they will pass either the Senate and be signed by the President, and maybe all we are doing is treading water.

My own view would be that the American public expects more than that. If it is broken, as the gentleman says it is, and he says just now a significant number, I don't know if it is a majority of his caucus, believe it is broken, then they have passed out bills out of their committee. This is not a question of trust; this is a question of can this House act. We can't control what the President does. We can't control what the United States Senate does. But as the majority leader well knows, Mr. Speaker, in times past I have said what we can control is what we do. What we can do is pass policy that we think is good policy, or at least that a majority of us think is a good policy, to fix a system.

We believe strongly that a comprehensive immigration bill is good for this country. Not only do we believe it is morally right to do, but we also believe that economically it is right to do. In fact, CBO scores the passage of a comprehensive immigration bill as a substantial help to the budget deficit. That we take people, put them on the tax rolls, make sure they are paying the taxes that are due, and make sure that our country is getting the revenues that it should be getting from those who are working in our country.

In fact, of course, in addition to that, if you talk to many people in industry, that is why the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has urged us to pass a comprehensive reform bill, it is why the AFL–CIO has urged us to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill, and it is why the agricultural community, the growers of America, have urged us to pass a comprehensive immigration bill, and it is why farmworker representatives have urged us to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill, and why most faith-based organizations in America have urged us to pass a comprehensive immigration bill.

I know there are some Members who would vote against it, but I urge my friend, the majority leader: bring it to the floor. I have said this before, but the Speaker made it very clear that he was going to lead this House in a way that would allow the House to work its will. If the majority of this House doesn't trust the President and they don't want to vote for H.R. 15, so be it. They will do that; they will vote ''no.''

But I believe there are the votes on the floor to pass comprehensive immigration reform, and the only reason it is not passing is because it is not brought to the floor. For that reason, Mr. Majority Leader, I would ask you, as respectfully as I can, to put the bill on the floor. You may well be right. Your party, which if it all votes together, could defeat a comprehensive immigration bill. If your party believes that is good policy and because of a lack of trust of the President, that should be the road that you go down, then fine. Let the American people see that.

If, however, there are at least very close to half of this House who are going to be signing that discharge petition, believe that it is good policy, and if, in fact, Speaker BOEHNER meant what he said, that he was going to allow the House to work its will, I would urge the majority leader to let the House work its will and bring that bill to the floor. Open it up for amendments. If the gentleman's party wants to offer amendments or my side wants to offer amendments, let that be the case. But let us let the House at least have the opportunity to work its will on this very, very important bill that we think is one of the most critical issues that we ought to be addressing.

I yield to my friend if he would like to respond.

□ 1300

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, all I would like to say to the gentleman is

he and I disagree that there would be a majority of votes for H.R. 15. It is a reflection of the comprehensive Senate bill, and I don't believe we have a majority in this House for that bill.

I would furthermore ask the gentleman whether he thinks—or I would just say that perhaps it would be more constructive that we sit down and begin to talk about where we can go in a direction that we have in common, that we feel that we can agree on things rather than differences; rather than filing discharge petitions, perhaps it would be a little more constructive to sit down, instead of demanding our way or the highway.

Again, too much of that has been the way this town has worked over the last several years, and it is unfortunate.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks. He and I have a difference of opinion. We discussed this the last time, as I recall. We have a difference of opinion. He thinks it would not pass. I think it would pass.

The good news for America is there is a very easy way to determine who is right and who is wrong. Put the bill on the floor, give the House a vote, give America a vote. If I am wrong, I will stand up on the floor of the House and say I was wrong.

I am sure that my friend, the majority leader, will do the same if, in fact, he is wrong, but we have an easy way in America to resolve such differences because we all have differences of opinion.

In a democracy, you vote. In a democracy, you resolve differences by coming together. I look forward to sitting down with the gentleman on this issue. I would reiterate I look forward to dealing with him on other issues as we have been able to do in many instances. I thank him for that opportunity.

We can resolve this difference by simply bringing the bill to the floor, giving America a vote, and letting the House work its will. Unless the gentleman wants to say something further, I yield back the balance of my time.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 11 a.m. tomorrow; and when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet on Tuesday, April 1, 2014, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

HONORING KIM RUBIN

(Mrs. BACHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extremely important person. Today marks 25 years that Kim Rubin has worked here on Capitol Hill.

In the 1980s, Kim Rubin accepted an internship with former Congressman Jack Kemp from her home State of New York. She has come a long way since then. She has been with me, I am proud to say, since day one that I served in the United States Congress.

I have never met anyone more loyal, more dependable, or more organized. Not only does Kim coordinate our office's schedule and those of our entire staff, she works diligently as our office manager.

Somehow, she still has the time and energy to be a dedicated wife to her loving husband, Howie, and also to her two beautiful daughters, Lexi and Livi. She is also a volleyball coach, and her nickname is Coach K.

As Kim says, her life is centered on faith, family, and pursuing what makes you happy. I don't know how Kim does it all, but it has been an honor to work with Kim Rubin for these past 8 years.

While we will part ways after we both retire this year, I know I will have a lifelong friend in the indomitable Kim Rubin.

Congratulations and thank you, Kim Rubin.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

(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, the Endangered Species Act was signed into law in 1973, in order to preserve, protect, and recover key domestic species.

The ESA also contains a citizen lawsuit provision, which allows private citizens—and, in many cases, special interest organizations—to sue Federal agencies and private landowners for allegedly failing to comply with ESA. Taxpayers are on the hook, even when the Federal Government prevails.

The Forest Service, which I had the privilege of holding jurisdiction over as chairman of the Agricultural Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy, and Forestry, must comply with ESA before engaging in any kind of forest management activity, which is the agency's most basic and fundamental role

Protecting species is our goal, but unfortunately, this provision has been used as a tool by those who would like to halt land management activities.

The financial impact of these activities in the Forest Service is significant, posing a threat to the forest health, the economic well-being of local communities, and also the species we are aiming to protect.

We must replace this flawed policy with one that protects taxpayers and species restoration, but also the health of our forests and our local economies.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize Members for Special Orders speeches without prejudice to the possible resumption of legislative business.

WEEK IN REVIEW

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, a surprising twist today: Who says there is nothing surprising in Washington? We were told there was potential for a bill to come to the floor today to deal with the issue of the SGR, sustainable growth rate, or the doc fix, as it is sometimes called.

There has been some disagreement in our party what would be the best way to handle it. We had a bill. It was a 1-year extension, 1 year that included some other things that some of the people that are providing the care that haven't been properly treated in reimbursement areas we are not happy about.

So it appeared we didn't have—or our leaders may not have had the votes, and so it is quite a surprise that was voice-voted. No one asked for a recorded vote because normally, see, we trust our leaders that, if there is an important bill, that part of the leadership understand, someone here, part of the bill will request a recorded vote, and we will get a recorded vote, and we will all be able to either vote for or vote against.

Otherwise, we have to keep people here all the time, and it did bring back to mind the time that was not so fond back in 2007, 2008, sometimes 2009 and 2010, when on the first day back in Washington, whether it was a Monday or a Tuesday, the first day, there is suspension bills.

Those are bills that are expected to pass and have two-thirds of the body vote for them, naming courthouses, naming Federal buildings, recognizing some important person or deed, those type of things.

They are generally agreed to, and despite all the negativity in Washington, those are things that we agreed to constantly; and both sides of the aisle worked together getting it accomplished.

We saw very quickly, after Republicans lost the majority in November of 2006, sometimes Republican leadership would agree to allow some suspensions to go when it was extremely important. It should never have been brought to the floor on suspension, which means it doesn't go through subcommittee, it doesn't go through committee.

It just comes to the floor, without having gone through Rules Committee,

and that is why it takes two-thirds of a vote, because it bypassed the normal procedure.

There were a handful of us who decided back in 2007, since Republican leadership at that time were agreeing to things that we knew our other friends in the Republican side, some friends on the Democratic side would never vote for, if it was a recorded vote, where everyone had a chance to vote—I started flying back early. I know TOM PRICE did at times; LYNN WESTMORELAND did at times.

I got to where I was flying back, even if I thought somebody else was covering the floor. The reason was to make sure that, since we couldn't trust that our leadership would not agree to some bill that we thought was hurtful to the country, was hurtful to the Constitution or to our constituents, we had to be here to ask for a recorded vote.

It went unnoticed except by leadership staff on both sides, and it got to where, when I came to the floor and would sit here for 3 or 4 hours, I would have staff come up, usually Democratic staff, since they were in the majority, and say: Well, obviously, you are concerned about some issue.

Sometimes, I was just here to observe, to make sure nothing was brought to the floor without any notice. Sometimes, there was a particular suspension that I felt should have a recorded vote, so I would show up, and I would, after the voice vote, request a recorded vote.

That is why staff started coming up and saying: Look, which one are you going to demand a recorded vote on or are you going to object to?

Sometimes, I would get up and speak against the bill. It got to where if I had an objection, they knew—because I'd done it between the time of the call for a recorded vote—I would go back to my office; I would type up a notice on why a bill was not a good bill.

I would be standing at the door, get a few other people to stand at other doors to hand out little fliers to Members of Congress as they came to the floor explaining why it wasn't a good bill.

Sometimes, I won; sometimes, I lost, but all you had to get was one more then one-third of the votes to bring down a suspension. So we were able to deal with that issue and make sure that, you know, people knew if you are going to try to pull that stuff, we are going to have people sit here, so that you can't just pass something on a voice vote without it being called for a recorded vote.

I was very surprised today with us in the majority, our own leadership in charge, with something as important as the doctor fix would be brought to the floor on a voice vote.

I would have come over earlier, except it was in recess, back in session, recess, back in session. I didn't know how long the recesses were going to be, but now, I know that I need to get with some other Members and make sure we have people on the floor, since we won't be sure what our own leadership is going to do.

That is very unfortunate. It is unfortunate. You need to be able to trust your own leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's, on another matter, very important that we note that this year's Margaret Sanger Award would go to former Speaker NANCY PELOSI.

I have an article here from American Thinker, dated yesterday. Jeannie DeAngelis wrote the article. I won't read the whole article, but it points out that any woman willing to call late term abortion ''sacred ground'' and make false accusations that the opposing political party voting for the Protect Life Act would leave pregnant women ''dying on the floor'' deserves an award named after eugenicist Margaret Sanger.

NANCY PELOSI will be given the Margaret Sanger Award, which Planned Parenthood considers its ''highest honor.''

Further down, it says:

> A committed socialist, Margaret Sanger once said, ''My own personal feelings drew me toward the individualist anarchist philosophy, but it seemed necessary to approach the idea by way the socialism,'' Sanger said.

□ 1315

She also said this:

> This is the great day of social planning. We have come to believe in planning the production and distribution of goods. We plan methods of governing cities, States, and the Nation. We plan jobs and leisure time activities and vacations. We plan almost everything, big and little, except families.

Sanger goes on to say:

> It can scarcely do any harm—and it may do a vast amount of good—to engage in the thoughtful planning of our population, a population with a still larger percentage of happy families.

An active worker for the Socialist Party, Sanger believed:

> The more radical the ideas, the more conservative you must be in your dress.

Saul Alinsky said:

> Dresses his crusades in vestments of morality.

The article says:

> For Margaret Sanger, eugenics was an avenue to improve the human race by discouraging people with genetic defects or undesirable traits—Blacks, immigrants, and poor people—whom she called ''human weeds, reckless breeders, spawning human beings who never should have been born.''

Further down, it points out another irony, which is that Italian American NANCY PATRICIA D'ALESANDRO PELOSI had grandparents named Maria and Tommaso, who immigrated to America from Italy. If Margaret Sanger had had her eugenic way with Maria Foppiani-Petronilla, Ms. PELOSI wouldn't be here, let alone be receiving an award.

In February of 1919, in the Birth Control Review, Sanger published an article entitled, ''Birth Control and Racial Betterment.''

In 1934, Sanger wrote an article entitled, ''America Needs a Code for Babies: Plea for Equal Distribution of Births.'' Ms. Sanger's baby code said that people with bad genes, or dysgenic groups, should be given a choice between sterilization and segregation. Those who willingly chose sterilization should be rewarded by contributing to a superior race.

In article 6, Sanger suggested issuing parenthood permits that would be valid for no more than one birth.

> Despite being lionized by socialist liberals, Margaret ''every child a wanted child'' Sanger's legacy is one of murder, racism, revulsion for the handicapped, intrinsic disgust for the male gender, and a form of twisted radicalism that viewed God-ordained marriage and the miracle of life with contempt.
>
> Margaret Sanger's life was committed to curing what she viewed as the ''urgent problem'' of how to ''limit and discourage the overfertility of the mentally and physically defective.''

It should be noted that, in the past, our former Secretary of State, Secretary Clinton, received the same Margaret Sanger Award, who believed in eugenics, who believed it was a good thing to limit the births of races who, perhaps, were too poor, who she thought were dysgenic.

This article from, actually, March 31, 2009, Catholic Online, points out:

> A day before receiving the Planned Parenthood Federation of America's highest honor, the Margaret Sanger Award, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton paid a visit to the basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City, leaving a bouquet of white flowers ''on behalf of the American people.''
>
> When leaving the basilica a half an hour later, Secretary Clinton told some of the Mexicans who were gathered outside to greet her, ''You have a marvelous virgin.''

The following day, Friday, March 27, Clinton was in Houston to receive the Margaret Sanger Award, named for the organization's founder, a noted eugenicist. Secretary Clinton, according to a State Department transcript of Secretary Clinton's remarks, said this:

> I admire Margaret Sanger enormously—her courage, her tenacity, her vision. When I think about what she did all those years ago in Brooklyn, taking on archetypes, taking on attitudes and accusations flowing from all directions, I am really in awe of her.

Another article points out, from The Weekly Standard, April 15, 2009, that Secretary Clinton stands by her praise of eugenicist Margaret Sanger.

Secretary Clinton points out:

> Now, I have to tell you that it was a great privilege when I was told I would receive this award. I admire Margaret Sanger enormously—her courage, her tenacity, her vision.

It is probably worth looking at exactly what Margaret Sanger stood for since she is so admired by our former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who could end up being President, and our former Speaker of the House NANCY PELOSI. Let's look at exactly what Margaret Sanger said. Here are some quotes from Margaret Sanger.

> The most merciful thing that the large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it.

That is Margaret Sanger. That is Margaret Sanger, whose name adorns

an award that was so revered by Secretary Clinton and now by our former Speaker PELOSI. It is unbelievable that anybody would be held in high esteem who would make that statement:

The most merciful thing that the large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it.

For heaven's sake. That is not all. She had plenty more to say.

We should apply a stern and rigid policy of sterilization and segregation to that grade of population whose progeny is tainted or whose inheritance is such that objectionable traits may be transmitted to offspring.

That was from ''A Plan for Peace,'' from the Birth Control Review in April of 1932. The first quote I read was ''Woman and the New Race'' from chapter 6, ''The Wickedness of Creating Large Families.''

Then from ''America Needs a Code for Babies,'' in March of 1934, article 1:

The purpose of the American baby code shall be to provide for a better distribution of babies and to protect society against the propagation and increase of the unfit.

You see, it is important to note here that what this kind of code does is say that we need a governing body that will decide who they think is fit and who they think is unfit. Gee, how about that? In ObamaCare, we have a panel that will decide. You get a pacemaker. You don't get a pacemaker. We know your hip is giving you a lot of pain, but you are just not worth a new hip. Do you need a new knee? Ah, we have looked at your life, and we have looked at your age. You don't get a new knee. You just suffer and die.

I mean, it is unbelievable that a bill would pass that sets up a board that will decide who can get a pacemaker to allow him to live and who will not, who will get the lifesaving medication and who will not. I don't want an insurance company making that decision, and I don't want the government making that decision. I had a bill that would have avoided that kind of thing, but of course, it didn't come to the floor when Democrats were in the majority. They brought, instead, ObamaCare, setting up that board.

Let's go back to quotes from Margaret Sanger.

Article 4, from her ''America Needs a Code for Babies,'' says:

No woman shall have the legal right to bear a child—and no man shall have the right to become a father—without a permit.

Hey, there is good news. All you have to do is be politically ingratiated enough with the government under Margaret Sanger's code and they will give you a permit to have a baby, because they will consider you fit. Chances are, if you are of an opposing political view of those who are handing out the permits, you won't get a permit because you may have a child that disagrees with the people handing out the permits.

It quotes article 6:

No permit for parenthood shall be valid for more than one birth.

This was Margaret Sanger.

She also said, in 1932, in the April Birth Control Review:

Give dysgenic groups—that's people with bad genes—in our population their choice of segregation or compulsory sterilization.

In 1922, she said:

Birth control must lead, ultimately, to a cleaner race.

Gee, the Nazis were pretty good about pushing a cleaner race, but thank God they were completely wrong about the White superhuman race. I always loved that about Jesse Owens. He went there, to the heart of the Nazis, and showed them they were wrong about their superhuman race, and yet here we have a woman, Margaret Sanger, being held in such great, high esteem, who thinks we need a cleaner race, according to her whims.

Here is another quote from the esteemed Margaret Sanger. This is from ''The Need for Birth Control in America.'' It is quoted by Angela Franks:

Such parents swell the pathetic ranks of the unemployed. Feeblemindedness perpetuates itself from the ranks of those who are blandly indifferent to their racial responsibilities, and it is largely this type of humanity we are now drawing upon to populate our world for the generations to come. In this orgy of multiplying and replenishing the Earth, this type is pari passu multiplying and perpetuating those direct evils in which we must, if civilization is to survive, extirpate by the very roots.

Here is another quote. This is from ''Family Limitation,'' Margaret Sanger's eighth edition, in 1918:

Women of the working class, especially wage workers, should not have more than two children at most. The average working man can support no more, and the average working woman can take care of no more in decent fashion.

So that is Margaret Sanger. She is there to tell the world repeatedly that we need a government that will restrict the feebleminded or maybe, according to her, these disgusting women who work for wages. Ah, we can't let them have many children. Yet some have the nerve to say that Republicans have a war on women when you look at the heroine of the left, and she was for eugenics. She was a racist. She was a classist—a divider—who wanted and thought the best thing a large family could do was to kill a baby. We consider her a hero?

Forbid it, Almighty God.

I know my friends on the other side of the aisle don't have a single person on this side of the aisle who want children to go hungry or who want children to have a worse life than we have. I know that, but it is all about the way of getting there.

□ 1330

So there are those of us who think the best thing a person could have for their own self-respect and their own freedom and their own ability to remove themselves from the ties and chains, the strings that come with money from the government, is to get them a job. Grow the economy so they can have a job and the self-respect and the freedom that comes from that.

I know they have the best of intentions on the other side of the aisle, but I don't think that you help individuals by paying them not to work. Let's get the economy going so they can work and be free from all the strings and entanglements that come from handouts from the government.

I would never call somebody on the other side of the aisle a racist or a hater of the poor. So it gets a little disgusting when I hear that about people on my side of the aisle. We don't want anybody to suffer.

We have seen the likes of Margaret Sanger who think they know better. Get the government in charge, and then we will order people to be sterilized. And we will give you money if you will be sterilized. That is what government does.

Strings come with the money. They always do. We need the government to give out less money because people need less money because they are able to earn it for themselves with all the freedom that means. That is what we want for America. That is what the Founders wanted. And that makes for a much more free America.

In that regard, when it comes to freedom, I know the people that voted for ObamaCare thought it was going to be a great idea, even though most of them had never read it like I did. Because I could see it was a threat to all kinds of freedoms, and I could see before the vote there were provisions in there that allowed for clinics to get Federal money to provide abortion and to have insurance policies that would end up providing abortion.

So I was shocked this week at the Supreme Court. I wasn't in the courtroom. I was listening in a side room for members of the Supreme Court Bar. I was shocked to hear somebody on the Supreme Court actually take the position, Well, just pay the tax and then you can have your religious views.

The power to tax is the power to destroy. Our Founders knew that. Taxation helped cause a revolution. And in fairness to the people of the District of Columbia, they are the only group who, under the Constitution, are not allowed to have a full voting Member of Congress, and who are required nonetheless to pay Federal income tax. Puerto Rico, Samoa, Mariana Islands, all of those that are territories, under the Constitution they are not entitled to a full voting Representative and do not pay Federal income tax.

Franklin made clear during the Revolution that if we do not get to elect one member of the parliament, then that parliament has no right to put taxes on us. I agree. So when Democrats were in charge, I had a bill. They wouldn't bring my bill to the floor. Now the Republicans are in the majority. They haven't so far—or our leaders haven't. I think it is only fair. They don't get to vote for a full voting Member of the House. So in fairness, the way to fix that legislatively is just to do for the District of Columbia what

we do for Puerto Rico, Guam, Samoa, and the Mariana Islands. You don't pay Federal income tax. That would be fair.

There are all kinds of things that aren't fair. But when it comes to intrusions by the government onto religious beliefs, the line cannot be drawn so that it excludes religious beliefs and the ability to practice them.

For anyone, especially a Supreme Court Justice, and even someone who worked for President Obama as Solicitor General, who said—and I am paraphrasing because she didn't say these words—I never did my job when it came to ObamaCare. I didn't talk to the administration about it. I didn't talk to them about what would help them when it came before the Supreme Court. So I didn't do my job as Solicitor General, and that is why I am qualified to be on the Supreme Court.

Unfortunately, the Senate bought that. That is the implied position. They bought that. She is on the Supreme Court. She lights into the Hobby Lobby attorney immediately. But to come around and say, Just pay the tax, then you can have your religious beliefs, you can practice your religious beliefs, it is not that expensive—what's next?

As a judge who has signed death penalty orders, I have struggled with that issue. I believe in some cases it is appropriate. I thought it was totally appropriate in Jasper, Texas, after three people were convicted of dragging an African American behind their truck. Once they had a fair trial, fair appeal, properly convicted, I wouldn't have had a problem with a law that said the victim's family gets to choose the truck and the terrain over which they drag the defendants to their deaths.

When we give the power to decide who gets to practice firmly held religious beliefs to a Supreme Court or to a 218-vote majority in the House, this Republic and the freedoms it has provided more than any Nation in history can't be much longer for the world—not those freedoms—not when Congress will stand by and allow those to be taken.

I think everybody that was here for that vote on ObamaCare knows good and well that if the intention of this government had been made clear that they were going to force people to go against firmly held Catholic beliefs, Christian beliefs, that bill would have never passed. And now they seek to enforce what would never have passed if their intentions had been made clear—it is before the Supreme Court. And who knows what they will do.

Mr. Speaker, my hopes and prayers are still for ongoing religious freedom promised under the First Amendment, and that they will not be taken away on our watch. But that kind of depends on the American people and the people they put in office and the people they allow to serve on the Supreme Court.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4152. An act to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1827. An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the American Fighter Aces, collectively, in recognition of their heroic military service and defense of our country's freedom throughout the history of aviation warfare.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the history of our country, our economic development, is predicated on our infrastructure development. Early in our history, canals, ports, postal roads, and 152 years ago, the transcontinental railroad—audacious at the time—proved to be a critical element of tying our nation together, fueling economic growth and communication.

Later, we had the interstate freeway system, which had its genesis going back over a century, nurtured in the basement of Franklin Roosevelt's White House, signed into law, and advocated by President Eisenhower.

One wonders: Could this Congress in Washington, D.C., today have produced the transcontinental railroad, the interstate highway system, provided the resources, the resolve, the research to send humans to the Moon? You have to pay for it. You have to take a risk. You have to have a plan and a design.

Sadly, it appears that that is lacking at this point.

I spent years on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which I finally left to go to Ways and Means and to serve on the Budget Committee to try and deal with the financing issue.

In 187 days, the highway trust fund is exhausted. It is not just that the reauthorization extension expires on September 30, but we have drawn the trust fund balances down to zero. It is already starting to be felt around the country. Because you cannot manage the multibillion-dollars worth of commitments that the Federal Government has made in partnership with State and local communities and the private sector without having some range of a financial cushion, probably on the order of $4 billion.

So that means that the Federal Government is going to start delaying the release of funding and having to choose which obligations it honors well before September 30. That means cutting back funding this summer is going to make a difference for local communities later this spring. Already, States are dealing with this uncertainty and making decisions, putting at risk, in some cases, construction seasons.

I think we have reached the point that there are no more cans to kick over or seat cushions to reach behind. If that doesn't make sense to you, sleight of hand, to use another general fund fix.

We have transferred outright over $50 billion to the general fund since 2008, and we have backfilled by using the Recovery Act, or the so-called stimulus funding. We made an adjustment in the Tax Code dealing with provisions for retirement benefits that were adjusted that somehow gave us a little headroom that enabled us to fund a 27-month extension.

But we are running out of these fixes, and we are not giving the certainty that the private sector, local governments, State governments, that our communities need to be able to deal with the more complicated, more expensive, longer-term projects, especially those that may involve more than one State, those that may be multimodal in nature. These expensive and complicated projects require steady, stable sources of funding.

Mr. Speaker, it has been 21 years since the Federal Government last adjusted the gas tax. It was 1993. That is back when gasoline was $1.08 a gallon. It is back when there were fewer demands in terms of the highway trust fund, when cars were less fuel-efficient.

In the course of that time, we have watched inflation eat away at the value of that 18.4 cents a gallon that people pay for their Federal gas tax, and because people are using more fuel-efficient cars and because the vehicle miles traveled have been reduced for 9 consecutive years, the amount that the individual pays per mile to support our Federal transportation infrastructure has been cut by more than 50 percent. And Congress has been dancing around this issue.

□ 1345

I have proposed that we adopt the recommendation of the Simpson-Bowles Commission that was so widely heralded 3 years ago, to have a phased 3-year increase in the gas tax.

I would note that it is supported by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, by the AFL–CIO, by local governments, by transit agencies, environmentalists, by professional groups and organizations, local officials.

It is interesting that the AAA, representing auto users, and the trucking industry have both said: Federal Government, you should raise the fuel tax—not that we are wild about the fuel tax, but because the costs of not doing it are going to cost our motorists, going to cost our trucking industry and the American economy far more than the few cents per gallon that would be paid.

I have also introduced legislation that would extend the vehicle mile traveled experiment that Oregon has been doing over the course of the last 10 years. That would allow States to experiment with a different approach that wouldn't be based on gallons of fuel consumed, but based on actual road use, so that people can experiment for themselves to see if this is a promising solution.

Mr. Speaker, for the last 15 years, I have watched blue ribbon commissions come forward impaneled by Republicans and Democrats.

I have listened to the testimony from the business community, from organized labor, from local government, from experts all across the scale who have recommended that we step up and adequately fund the highway trust account, so that we can provide the certainty and the capacity to be able to rebuild and renew America.

I, for one, am open to all sorts of suggestions; but it is interesting to note, when my friend DAVE CAMP introduced his tax reform proposal that would have allowed some space for the highway trust fund, which was announced on the same day that President Obama—who I think sincerely is interested in infrastructure—a proposal for $300 billion—over $300 billion—that both proposals were pronounced dead on arrival, that they had no political backing, they had very little likelihood of being passed.

When they made their announcements, they were not joined by labor, by business, by local government, by the professions, by people in both parties who are concerned with getting on with business.

I will have more to say, but I have been joined by a couple of my colleagues who are concerned about this, who have been working in this arena, who have some proposals, and I would turn first to my colleague from Maryland (Mr. DELANEY), who has been working in this space, adding to the conversation in a way to help us move forward. I am happy to yield to him for some comments.

Mr. DELANEY. I thank my good friend from Oregon for your really singular leadership on this issue and your unwavering commitment to make sure these problems get solved.

Mr. Speaker, every 2 years, the American Society of Civil Engineers does an analysis of the U.S. infrastructure needs and an assessment of our infrastructure as it relates to our competitors around the world.

In this last analysis they did, they produced a report card, where they graded each component of U.S. infrastructure. They also gave us a composite grade, and that grade was a D-plus. A D-plus, Mr. Speaker, was the grade that the U.S. infrastructure received from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

They estimated further that the amount of investment we would need to make as a country to bring our infrastructure up to a high standard is $3 trillion to $4 trillion. $3 trillion to $4 trillion, Mr. Speaker, is the gap, the investment gap in the infrastructure in the United States of America.

This creates a very significant challenge for us as a Nation, as we look to compete in a global and technology-enabled world. To successfully compete in a global and technology-enabled world, you need world-class transportation, energy, communications, and infrastructure to be able to compete successfully.

It also creates a great opportunity for us, as a Nation, because investing in our infrastructure is proven to be one of the great jobs programs in this country. It creates middle-skilled jobs. Infrastructure disproportionately creates middle-skilled jobs, which is what we need in this country.

We are actually creating high-skilled jobs at a decent rate, we are creating low-skilled jobs at a decent rate; but we are not creating middle-skilled jobs for middle-class Americans, the kind of Americans that built this country, saved this country, and saved the world, and that is a great tragedy. Investing in our infrastructure will do that.

It also happens to pencil out, Mr. Speaker. Across time, the data strongly suggests that for every dollar we spend on infrastructure, we get $1.92 of economic benefit as a Nation.

It will create jobs in the short term, it will make us more competitive in the long term, and it is a fundamentally good investment for us to make as a country.

As we think about filling this infrastructure hole, we should analyze how we actually invest in infrastructure in this country, and there are really four ways we do it.

First, government. Federal Government, State governments, and local governments actually grant money to build infrastructure, particularly infrastructure that is used for the public or common good. That is an important role of government, and government is unique in its ability to do that.

The second way we build infrastructure is through financing it with user fees. Things like the highway trust fund that my colleague referred to have largely been financed through our gas tax. There are other examples, at airports, et cetera, where we charge user fees, and that money is collected, and we build infrastructure with it.

The third way we build infrastructure in this country is through public-private partnerships, where we go to the private sector, and for certain types of infrastructure, we get the private sector to build the infrastructure.

Finally, the fourth way we build infrastructure is we finance it. In other words, State governments and local governments borrow money to build infrastructure.

These are the four ways we build infrastructure in this country. If we actually want to close this infrastructure investment gap that we have, if we actually want to close this $3 trillion to $4 trillion gap, if we want to bring our infrastructure from a D-plus grade to something we would be more proud of, like an A grade, we need to be bolstering all four of these methods.

The good news, Mr. Speaker, is that there are bipartisan ways of doing all of these things, and that is what we need to focus on. One example of a bipartisan solution to this problem is a piece of legislation that I introduced with several colleagues almost a year ago. It is called the Partnership to Build America Act.

The Partnership to Build America Act, as of today, has 29 House Republicans on it and 29 House Democrats on it. It was also introduced in the Senate about a month ago with a dozen Senators, also bipartisan.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, the Partnership to Build America Act is the most significant piece of bipartisan economic legislation in the whole of the Congress, and what it does is it creates a large-scale infrastructure financing vehicle called the American infrastructure fund, which will be capitalized for 50 years and be used by States and local governments to build and finance infrastructure.

The money in the American infrastructure fund, Mr. Speaker, is not put in by the Federal Government, but it is put in by corporations who invest and buy very low-cost bonds to finance the American infrastructure fund over 50 years.

As an incentive to get them to put this money in, we allow them to bring back a certain amount of their overseas earnings—their overseas cash back to the United States tax-free.

Almost half of corporate tax is sitting overseas because of flaws in our international tax system. This allows for over $200 billion of that money to come back, a quarter of which would have to be invested in the American infrastructure fund, and create a 50-year revolving financing vehicle to help close this gap.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Partnership to Build America Act is a real example of bipartisan progress to solve an important problem facing this Nation, to get Americans to work, make us more competitive in the long term, and use our precious resources in a wise and prudent manner that pencils out. It will be the category killer for the financing challenge we have around infrastructure.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will close by reminding everyone of the importance of this issue. Investing in our infrastructure should be our top domestic economic priority. It should be our top jobs program.

We should be bolstering all the ways we have in this Nation to build our infrastructure; and the good news, Mr. Speaker, is we can do it in a bipartisan way.

I yield back to my friend from Oregon.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentleman joining us and couldn't agree more about the critical nature of investing in our economy and putting people to work. Millions of jobs are at stake, jobs that won't be outsourced overseas. I appreciate your joining in that conversation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like next to turn to the dean of the Oregon delegation, someone with whom I have been privileged to work for over 3 decades. Congressman PETER DEFAZIO is a senior member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, ranking member of Natural Resources, somebody who I have found to be tireless in his promotion of infrastructure investment, creative in terms of ways to approach it.

Mr. Speaker, I think a number of us would be open to any mechanism that provides steady, predictable resources that would be able to meet the needs because, before you can have public-private partnerships so you can deal with financing, you have got to have the underlying funding.

There is nobody who has spent more time and creativity and taken more risks to advance that than my friend and colleague, PETER DEFAZIO.

I am very pleased that you have joined us to be a part of this conversation and can't say enough for your tireless efforts to try and make sure that we realize the promise of infrastructure investment and that we actually do it.

I yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman. I thank Congressman BLUMENAUER for his leadership, a former member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

We have sent him over to the Ways and Means Committee because we can put forward the need, we can document what we need to build and rebuild; but, in the end, someone has got to be responsible for raising the money, and, ultimately, it is going to be Ways and Means, and Earl has certainly taken a point position there.

We are at an unprecedented point. We haven't been here before since the creation of the national highway program under President Dwight David Eisenhower.

On October 1—or before then even, the trust funds established by Eisenhower, financed by user fees, gas tax, diesel tax, and some other fees on excise taxes, et cetera—but, principally, the fuel tax—is going to be depleted to the point where, if we don't act before October 1, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the obligation authority, that is, the amount of money the Federal Government could invest, beginning next October 1, in any and all transportation projects across the United States of America—roads, bridges, highways, transit—will drop to zero—zero.

Now, this is not one of these other phony cliffs around here that have been created by an intransigent majority and a bunch of grandstanders. This is real. This is real.

Think of what that means to the States. To my State, it means a loss of about $450 million of Federal aid to fund our Federal highway system in the State of Oregon.

It means that all across America, you are talking about millions of jobs and incredible lost opportunities in terms of creating new jobs and dealing with a crumbling infrastructure, which has already been discussed a little bit before me.

So Congress has to get serious about this. You can't whistle by the graveyard on this one. You can't pretend it is not a fake crisis. It is a real crisis.

Congressman BLUMENAUER explained how it has happened over the years. We haven't raised the gas tax since 1993.

Now, a lot of people look at 4 bucks a gallon at the pump come Memorial Day, and they say: that damn government taking all that money.

No. 18.4 cents went to the Federal Government in 1993 when gas was about a buck a gallon, and in 2014, when ExxonMobil jacks it up over $4 for the Memorial Day holiday, 18.4 cents will go to the Federal Government.

□ 1400

I would be a lot happier at those higher prices if I knew some of it was going to rebuild our crumbling bridges, some of it was going to fill in the potholes and deal with the failing pavement, some of it was going to the deficit in our transit infrastructure, which is about $70 billion. The nice thing, if we make those investments which have already been mentioned, it creates about 20,000 jobs for every $1 billion dollars we spend—and not just construction jobs. You have engineering jobs. You have technical support jobs. You have small business suppliers. In transit, you have manufacturing jobs. You have even high-tech jobs, computer-driven transit vehicles, and et cetera. All across the economy, it would create jobs, 20,000 jobs per $1 billion dollars.

And we have the strongest Buy America requirements of any part of the Federal Government, way stronger than the Pentagon. So when we invest those dollars, Americans go to work or go back to work.

But guess what, the other side works. If we stop spending that money on October 1, hundreds of thousands, millions of people will lose their jobs across many sectors in this country, and we will become the laughingstock of the world. The greatest nation on Earth can't afford to invest in its future, in its competitiveness, in rebuilding the Eisenhower-era infrastructure and building an infrastructure suitable for the 21st century to make us more competitive? It is not too hard. One simple way to do it would be to take the existing gas tax and index it.

What does that mean? Well, part of the reason that we are in this pickle is because the gas tax has remained 18.4 cents a gallon since 1993. That means, with inflation, it has been eroded. And as cars and fleets become more efficient, people are driving more miles with fewer gallons of gas, which is a good thing. So if you indexed it and said, okay, we will index the gas tax for construction cost, inflation, and fleet fuel economy, you would see a big increase in gas, about 1.4 to 1.7 cents a gallon next year. Wow.

Well, guess what. Just when I was home recently, I drove to work; and when I came home, gas was up a nickel a gallon because of the crisis in Ukraine. Where did that go? That went into the pockets of ExxonMobil.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. If the gentleman will yield.

Like you, I am on the plan going home every week. But for a weekend, I was at a conference, and so I missed being home for 10 days. In the space of 10 days, gasoline went up 19 cents a gallon at my corner gas station; and the next weekend, it had gone up 30 cents a gallon in 3 weeks. That didn't fill one pothole, didn't put one person to work. Thirty cents in 3 weeks.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman. I think it is an excellent point.

If we fully implemented Dodd-Frank and reined in some of the commodities speculators, it wouldn't be quite so volatile. But the point is, if we took a tiny fraction of the way they jack it up when you are driving to work every week and invested it, your friends, your neighbors would go to work, your commutes would be better, there would be less damage to your car, the country would be more efficient, and we would lose less jobs overseas.

So, if we indexed it and we paid it back over 15 years, we could put somewhere between $120 and $150 billion into the trust fund that would be paid for and paid back over a 15-year period.

Another alternative would be to put $1 on a barrel of crude oil. For every $1 you tax a barrel of crude oil today—Texas is at $101.70, I think, when I last checked—that would be less than 1 percent. That raises $4 billion a year to invest in the future of America, its infrastructure, and putting people back to work in this country. It would also help to rein in some of the speculation on the price of crude oil. And it would also help because OPEC and other suppliers would have to be paying a part of rebuilding our infrastructure.

The proposal I put forward exempts all manufacturing; it exempts all heating oil; it exempts all agricultural uses; it exempts school buses and other things that are currently exempt. So it would only be the fraction of the barrel that goes to current taxable transportation use as $1 dollar a barrel, which is $4 billion a year. Again, we could use that future cash flow to bond and fill in the giant pothole in the trust fund.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you.

Well, I deeply appreciate, again, your partnership and your leadership; and what you just demonstrated, a series of

ways that we could have adjustments to transportation finance that would be predictable, sustainable, and, as you have pointed out, at a time of record-low interest rates, having a steady revenue stream would permit us to be able to take advantage of that favorable borrowing environment to get multiple benefits. Essentially, if we had done that earlier, as you and I had suggested during the Recovery Act, essentially, we would have had free money because the interest rates were so low. But I appreciate your tenacity and creativity.

We have been joined by another of our colleagues.

Congresswoman TITUS, I must say, I deeply appreciated your hospitality when we visited Nevada, looked at transportation needs, met with people in your community who rely on being able to have this infrastructure work. You have been on a roller coaster in Nevada in terms of boom and bust, but I deeply appreciated your being able to help me understand those dynamics. Your leadership in this arena is welcomed, and I yield to you to join into the conversation.

Ms. TITUS. Well, thank you very much, Congressman BLUMENAUER. You are always welcome to come to my district in Las Vegas. We were very glad to have you there, and you brought your leadership. And I appreciate your wearing your bicycle, because that is one of the things I want to talk about.

A part of infrastructure is safe streets and the ability for our pedestrians and our bicyclists to be safe, as well as through other means of transportation. I certainly respect Congressman DEFAZIO's leadership on this. And I appreciate hearing some of the creative ideas you have for moving infrastructure forward because it is so important that we fund it, and having this hour to talk about the critical role of government and maintaining and enhancing our infrastructure I think is not only timely, but is critical.

As you heard earlier, the most recent report card from the American Society of Civil Engineers clearly illustrates the dismal condition of our Nation's infrastructure. Now, the good news is we moved up a grade, but the bad news is we went from D to D-plus. So that is not too much to brag about. If that were one of my students, I wouldn't be too proud of that level of accomplishment.

Well, if you look in more detail at the findings of that report, you would find that more than half of the Nation's roads are in poor or mediocre condition. One out of every four bridges is in need of significant repair or can't handle the traffic that relies on it.

We have seen the price of this crumbling infrastructure not just in a loss of jobs but also in a loss of lives. For one out of every three traffic fatalities, the condition of the road was a factor. So we have got to do better than that.

We recently received an update on the fiscal situation of the highway trust fund—the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) was referencing this—and if the projections hold, that trust fund will be insolvent by the end of July. Now, that is at the height of the construction season when we should be moving forward with these infrastructure projects. All of them will come to a standstill across the country, and that immediately threatens 660,000 jobs—direct jobs, not counting the extra industries that rely on that construction as well.

Now, our construction sector was hit very hard already by the great recession, and it continues to see unemployment levels twice the national average. So we simply cannot afford to let this trust fund lapse.

We need to take immediate action to shore it up and remove the insolvency because it not only halts progress, but it injects uncertainty into our State capitals, our city halls, and all of the transit agencies across the country who don't know whether to move forward with projects or not because the money just may not be there.

If you look at the cities, like Las Vegas, you can see how this is especially hard-hitting because infrastructure is at the heart of our local economy. We have world-class hotels and casinos and restaurants and retail, but we rely on infrastructure to bring to us people and goods from around the world, whether it is rail or air or highways. We import everything, from tourists to lobster. We don't make it in there. We have to bring it in. And if you don't have good infrastructure, that system is not going to work.

So as we turn our attention to the next surface transportation authorization, I want us to invest in a number of things, and one of them is existing and future freight corridors. On that list, I hope to see the development of I–11. That interstate has been designated, but we need to move forward with it. It would go from Las Vegas to Phoenix. Eventually, it would connect all points north and south. But right now, Phoenix and Las Vegas are the only two major metropolitan areas in the country that are not connected by an interstate highway.

So this would create new freight corridors. It would relieve the congestion on the narrow road that exists there now. It would save lives. It would increase the connection between the roughly 8 million people who live in that area, and it would foster tourism, which would be a good thing for our economy. So I hope that we can move forward on that because it would be very important for moving freight in the kind of post-Panamax economy.

In addition to this, I am concerned about the safety of the travelling public in the urban areas. And this is where you and I have had many discussions about pedestrians and cyclists.

We have seen marginal improvements in highway safety. That has been going in the right direction. But pedestrian safety has been going in the wrong direction. That has been getting much worse if you look at the statistics. And more and more people are using that kind of transportation, for recreation, to get to work, to go shopping, for exercise. So that population is going to increase, and yet the fatalities have increased as well. In fact, nearly 16 percent of traffic deaths in 2012 were people who were walking or bicycling, and yet less than 1 percent of safety funding goes to infrastructure to protect those travelers.

And that trend is really true in southern Nevada. My district has the most dangerous crossings of any because it is metropolitan Las Vegas. In 2011, there were 23 pedestrian fatalities, but that jumped to 42 in 2012; and last year, 51 men, women, and children lost their lives in pedestrian accidents.

So I hope that as we move forward with infrastructure funding that we provide resources and services to address that issue. And part of that can be encouraging local governments to do planning policies, like the Complete Streets program. I know you are well aware of that, very familiar with it and involved in it. That takes into account the needs of all users when it comes to transportation. There are lots of possible improvements, like bus rapid transit, dedicated transit bike lanes, safer crosswalks. All of those will help users reach their destinations more quickly and more safely.

So as we look at infrastructure, let's remember that it is bridges, it is roads, it is railroads, it is airports, but also, we need to do what we can for those using bicycles and just walking on their own two feet.

I am committed to working on this. It is very important for our country and for our local economies. So count me in, and thank you for your leadership.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you so much, Representative TITUS.

It was fascinating, when we visited with your constituents, how passionate they were identifying the problems; and I commend you for working with them to try to squeeze what you could out of inadequate Federal, State, and local funding, but worked to try to help with the design, help with the advocacy. They were truly fired up and had lots of ideas about things to do.

And you are right. It would be a travesty if, when we are urging people to be able to do more walking and cycling, to reduce energy, to improve air quality and improve their health, if, in turn, we are putting more families at risk. And being able to have safe routes to school, being able to deal with pedestrian safety and making it part of the mix, I can't say enough about how much I admire your commitment to balanced transportation, to be able to tie those pieces together, and how you worked with your local constituents. It is truly a model, and I look forward to continuing with you on that in the future.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I do want to say that I also appreciate the reference to the economic impact in terms of the men and women who work in this arena. We have millions of tradespeople, men and women in the construction industry who have the necessary skills to rebuild and renew America, who want to work, and in too many of our communities have suffered disproportionate unemployment as a result of the near meltdown of the economy and the too slow recovery.

□ 1415

Being able to tap that energy, that excitement and that commitment I think is very, very important. I have been so impressed as we go around the country looking at the people there who are willing to put those skills to work, and it is an opportunity for a wide range of employment opportunities.

There are opportunities for people who are primarily just working with their hands where there is a lot of manual labor involved. There are a number of skilled opportunities in terms of what has happened in the trades in terms of equipment operation that adds increasing sophistication. There are jobs that are pencil ready where there is design, planning, and management. So there is a wide range.

My colleague mentioned the 20,000 jobs per billion dollars, and that 20,000 jobs includes lots of bedrock, middle class American, family-wage job opportunities, but for a wide range of skill sets and for people to get their feet on the ground to be able to build skills and move further in the advancement of their careers.

I really appreciate your advocacy there and would yield to the gentleman for further comment.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Let me just give one example. I have a company in my district called Johnson Rock Crushers. They produce a wide range of rock crushers. They are a major exporter from the U.S., and they are competitive in the world market. They are employing skilled labor and also engineers and others to design these materials. They are sourcing virtually all of their components in the United States for these very large pieces of equipment.

So there is an incredible multiplier effect. They are employing people who are in niche manufacturing somewhere making one big gear or making parts for the conveyor or the giant tires that go on these things. They are employing engineers to make the future designs. They just have finished a major contract for the Seabees with affordable equipment for the Seabees. So they are just covering an extraordinary range of things.

They showed me a chart, and the chart is what happens to their business when the future funding for the highway trust fund comes into question. They can show me what happened back when we did the SAFETEA-LU bill, how much business fell off. They can show me recently a fall-off in domestic business. They are doing pretty well internationally because other countries—somehow other countries can figure out how to invest in their infrastructure. They are concerned about becoming more competitive in the world economy, and they are making massive investments in China, Brazil, and in many of our competitor nations.

In fact, I recall once when my colleague, Mr. BLUMENAUER, heard me giving a speech. I was saying how I kind of thought the U.S. was becoming a Third World nation because of the deterioration of our infrastructure, which we have already talked about tonight. He came up to me afterwards and he said: Hey, you know, that was kind of insulting. And I'm like: Earl, what do you mean? You know how bad it is. I mean, at that point we were at a D, and now we are up to a D-plus for our infrastructure. And he said: No. No. It was insulting to Third World countries, because they are investing a higher percentage of their gross domestic product in their infrastructure than the United States of America.

We can afford these investments. In fact, we cannot afford to forgo these investments because we will lose more ground internationally; we will waste more fuel; people will spend more time in congestion; and we will kill more people on obsolete mass transit units like they did right here in Washington, D.C. These are investments we must make.

We have, in the past, led the world. We have been number one, number two after World War II up through near the nineties sometime. We are now number 26 in the world in terms of the state of our infrastructure. We are duking it out with Romania these days, I think. This is embarrassing. It is embarrassing for us not to be pushing forward with solutions now and not creating another cliff and eking it out to the end.

As Representative TITUS pointed out, some States are already cutting back their construction program for this construction year. Kansas is one I know of. They have said: Look, the way we run our State, we have got to be sure that the Federal reimbursement is going to be there when the project is done. We can't wait. Our constitution doesn't allow us to borrow money for these things. We can't go into deficit, unlike the Federal Government.

Therefore, just the prospect that the money might not be there is causing many States to say: Well, wait a minute. We are going to pull back here on these projects this coming year, and then if it actually happens on October 1, it will be a massive cutback next year.

I don't know what happens to transit. There is no transit system in the world, except maybe Hong Kong, that makes money. So to say we are going to withdraw all Federal support from transit would mean one heck of a loss of options for people in the United States.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate your detailing the difference it made with that company in your district and the multiplier effect for the employment for the various aspects of that product. It has been exciting for me to look at the range of people who are adding their voice to the cry for the Federal Government to step up and for Congress not to be AWOL on this and not have the collapse of the trust fund.

The range of people who have a keen interest in our being responsible and who are adding their voices is fascinating. There are big equipment manufacturers, like the Catapillars of this world, and smaller. There are people who lease heavy equipment. There are people who are involved with design and construction, people who are there with the materials, asphalt and concrete, sand and gravel; people who are there with the iron and steel that is necessary, the concrete.

You go through the range of people who are vitally interested in our meeting our responsibilities and who have the capacity of making huge economic contributions and who are ready, willing, and able to do so, and the vast majority of these jobs are right here in the United States. They are not going to be outsourced. Lots of equipment, manufacturing, and materials are right here. It is cost prohibitive for us not to. So it provides that local economic spark. Then there is the multiplier effect of the coffee shop across the street from the project and the people who are providing materials and supplies, people who benefit from this in dramatic ways.

I do appreciate your reminding us of how we have lost track of where we are in terms of global leadership. We were leaders in the development of our canals and the steam engine. We were leaders with our transcontinental railroad. Nobody did anything on that order of magnitude. We had the finest passenger rail system in the world up until about 70 years ago. We had the finest highway system. You can go through the list of areas that we were justifiably proud of being a global leader. And it was not just prestige. It was health, it was safety, and it was economic impact that made a difference. We appear to have lost our way.

It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, 6 years ago, there was no high-speed rail in China. And in 6 years, they have grown a high-speed rail system that will next year carry more passengers than the entire American aviation system. Other countries are building ports and highways and upgrading water and sewer. And we are stuck, we are losing ground, and it is Congress that has failed to step up for over two decades.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. The problem here in D.C. is that a lot of people, particularly the Congress, don't discriminate between investments, capital investments, and expenditures. You know, if

you buy fuel for the Federal fleet or a battleship or something, okay, that is an expenditure; it is consumed. But if you build a bridge that lasts 100 years, we count that the same as buying something that will be consumed in 1 day. That doesn't make any sense, but that is the way Congress works.

So they treat needed investments in the future mobility of the American people and saving fuel as being competitive, moving goods and people safely, they treat that exactly the same as a consumptive, 1-day expenditure for fuel for the Federal fleet or something else. That makes no sense. We need capital budgets. That is probably a longer term project around here. They need to at least recognize the need for these investments.

What I hear from a lot of naysayers is: Hey, you already did that. You did the stimulus, and that didn't work, did it?

Well, actually, if you look at the so-called stimulus, under the most generous interpretation of infrastructure, 4 percent went into traditional surface transportation infrastructure—4 percent, 4 percent of the $800 billion—and it created a heck of a lot more than 4 percent of the jobs that that bill created; a really generous infrastructure interpretation, you are up to 7 percent.

So I say, no, that was not a test. That money was well invested and spent, but it was totally insufficient for the job to repair and rebuild our infrastructure and bring it up to a good state of repair for the 20th century, let alone to begin to build out an efficient 21st century infrastructure. That is no test. That money was well spent and well invested.

There are some prominent commentators who say, oh, I don't know where that money went. I had a debate with one of them on television, actually. We can show exactly where that money went and exactly how many jobs were created, and it was certainly a net large return compared to many of the other things that were in that legislation. No, that wasn't a test.

A test would be if we made a commitment now to build a 21st century infrastructure and to rise from 26th in the world back to number one in the world within 10 years just like JFK said we will put us on the Moon in 10 years. Well, in 10 years, we could go back to having the number one infrastructure in the world, and in the meantime we would create a few million more jobs, and the long-term impact of that creates sustainable jobs of untold numbers over the years.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Absolutely. I have really appreciated your laser focus. At the time, you and I both wanted more investment in infrastructure. Something in the neighborhood of 40 percent were tax cuts that people didn't even think they got, that didn't have the multiplier effect, that we would have been well served to double or triple the amount of investment in infrastructure.

But I have been struck—and I know you have—that even though it was inadequate, that we could have done more and should have done more. I am struck by the number of businesses that have told me that that investment was the difference of whether or not their business was going to go under. We had people making bids at that time basically just to cover payroll. We got some of the most favorable bids that were offered up because people were desperate for that work, and so it stretched even further.

If we had had the foresight to invest more and then take advantage of the fact that the world was basically giving us their money for free, we could have had a tremendous impact. But the truth is that people were desperate for it. It made a difference, and it is a hint of what we could do if we did this right.

I am going to turn to my colleague for a moment for the last word, but I wanted to just say one thing in terms of my concluding observation.

I have been struck, in the 3 months since we have advanced these proposals, by the breadth of editorial support, by the unions, local governments, and elected officials in both parties who are stepping up at the State level to do this. Wyoming, I think, was the latest State that went ahead and raised a gas tax. We are hearing from engineers, and we are hearing from advocacy groups like truckers and Triple A that are doing the right thing and making a difficult recommendation because they know it is the right thing, and they think it is time to have an adult conversation with the American public.

I think it is time for us to listen to the people out there who don't just want, they are insisting that we meet our obligation as a full partner in infrastructure investment in this country, as we have done for years with State and local government, with the private sector, and with local communities.

□ 1430

I am convinced that it is one of those areas that once we get there and take the step, that it will bring the country together.

Mr. Speaker, historically, infrastructure has been an area that has rallied public support. People came together for these projects. I am convinced that if we step up and do our job, listening to people and giving that support, that it can be that same sort of rallying point. I don't want to be involved in a conversation about whether it is the Republicans' fault or the Democrats' fault, or it is the House versus the Senate or the legislative versus the executive. There has been enough foot-dragging over the last 20 years to go around.

So my hope is we can use this going forward to make a difference. I cannot thank you enough, Congressman DEFAZIO, for your insistence, your leadership, your persistence, your creativity, and your courage on this. It really makes a difference for those of us who are pushing for the path you have blazed and your continued, ongoing zeal to make this work.

Mr. DEFAZIO. To just boil it down to something pretty simple, I would say let's think about the future. Let's think about today, and let's think about the future. And those who would disinvest or devolve our obligations to create a national transportation system that is world class, devolve that duty to the 50 States assembled, or just ignore altogether that obligation, they really are showing that they don't take a long-term view for America, they don't have much faith in our future.

I have a heck of a lot of faith in our future, and it is going to take some leadership to get to that future. Doing simple things like maintaining the existing purchasing power of the gas tax through indexation and then using the future income to bond, and make a heck of a lot of investments now, will return more in the long term than it will cost, and it won't add a penny to the deficit. Just like the Federal highway trust fund has not been a net contributor to the deficit over time; it has been funded through user fees. We need to continue that principle.

In the future, we can probably evolve to something more high tech, vehicle miles traveled or things like that. We are not ready today to get there, and we sure as heck can't get there by October 1, so we have to work off the basics that we already have, that we have had since Dwight David Eisenhower, a Republican President, and it was Ronald Reagan who added mass transit into the highway trust fund. This has been truly a bipartisan issue over the years. We lost our way for a bit here, and it should become bipartisan again. We should all join together, and we should show that we really believe in America's future and make the investments that are necessary to get us there on a better national transportation system.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Well said, and I have nothing to add to that eloquence.

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

HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, CELEBRATES TRICENTENNIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) for 30 minutes.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the tricentennial of Hunterdon County, New Jersey, the county I have proudly called home my entire life and where my family has lived since 1739. The celebration this year is led by former State Senator Marcia Karrow and a hardworking committee of exemplary county residents.

The 300-year history of Hunterdon County is an excellent example of the

journey in the advancement of the English colonies in North America to the present day status of the United States of America throughout the world. To this day, Hunterdon County maintains its natural beauty and rural charm, as has been the case throughout its history.

The county is proud to be named for Robert Hunter, the distinguished royal governor of New York and New Jersey who sailed to America with 3,000 Palatinate German refugees in 1710. They, and thousands of others like them, yearned for religious freedom and a better life for themselves and their descendants. Hunterdon County was formed when it separated from Burlington County 300 years ago this month, in March of 1714.

From the first reading of the Declaration of Independence on the steps of what was then the Hunterdon County Courthouse in Trenton to General Washington's historic Delaware River crossing and decisive victory at the Battle of Trenton, Hunterdon's link to the 1776 birth of the United States is significant. I was personally inspired as a child by the tales of Captain Daniel Bray and the Hunterdon County militia who collected the boats on our western border that were used in Washington's crossing on Christmas night in that fateful year of our Nation's birth. The county boasts several sites associated with the Revolution, including the 1759 Vought House in Clinton Township, a Loyalist homestead that still exists with its architecturally distinguished serpentine ceiling.

The county is also proud of its agricultural heritage. The county seal originally included a hay wagon and now features a bountiful sheaf of wheat. Farming was the story of most county residents, from Native Americans through the earliest colonial settlers to those who lived at the beginning of the 20th century. Many barns dot the county landscape, and this heritage is celebrated annually at the Hunterdon County 4–H and Agricultural Fair.

A century and a half ago general stores and hotels, including several owned by my ancestors, were common in the towns that sprouted across the 400 square acres of the county. From Clinton in the north to Lambertville in the south, to Frenchtown in the west, to Flemington, the county seat, in the middle, they were the centers of life where Hunterdon families came to market, to socialize, and to worship.

The nature of Hunterdon has changed as the population increased from the mid-20th century forward. The large agricultural townships have become more heavily populated as farmland has been transformed to houses for new residents, who demanded improvements, including establishment of a system of regional schools and construction of the Hunterdon County Medical Center. After World War II, Hunterdon was the only county in the State still without a hospital. County leaders, including the Board of Agriculture, were responsible for the building of the medical center that opened in 1953. Since then, this health care facility has become one of the premier medical institutions in New Jersey. Public-spirited men and women created five distinguished regional high schools that would become leaders in the State in academics, athletics, and extracurricular activities.

The 300-year history of Hunterdon County has been captured in writings, photographs, and memories telling the compelling story of its sheer natural beauty, its people, and the larger community of churches, nonprofit groups, and civic organizations, with neighbor helping neighbor.

Our ancestor have striven for 300 years to make Hunterdon what it is today, a 21st century exemplar of the United States as a whole: free, self-governed, prosperous, and dedicated to the advancement of the Nation. We, the 130,000 current residents, have a responsibility to those who will come after us to preserve and improve the county we love.

Truly, Hunterdon County has always been and will always be in my heart.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. WENSTRUP (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of a death in the family.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on March 25, 2014, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills:

H.R. 3771. To accelerate the income tax benefits for charitable cash contributions for the relief of victims of the Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines

H.R. 2019. To eliminate taxpayer financing of political party conventions and reprogram savings to provide for a 10-year pediatric research initiative through the Common Fund administered by the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, March 28, 2014, at 11 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5100. A letter from the Vice President, Government Affairs and Corporate Communications, AMTRAK, transmitting a letter regarding the general and legislative annual report; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5101. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take Off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 30943; Amdt. No. 3577] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5102. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 30944; Amdt. No. 3578] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5103. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Stage 3 Helicopter Noise Certification Standards [Docket No.: FAA-2012-0948; Amdt. No. 36-29] (RIN: 2120-AJ96) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5104. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 30942; Amdt. No. 3576] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5105. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 30941; Amdt. No. 3575] received March 14, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5106. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Helicopter Air Ambulance, Commercial Helicopter, and Part 91 Helicopter Operations [Docket No.: FAA-2010-0982; Amdt. Nos. 91-330; 120-2; 135-129] (RIN: 2120-AJ53) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5107. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters (Type Certificate Previously Held by Eurocopter France) (Airbus Helicopters) [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0770; Directorate Identifier 2011-SW-057-AD; Amendment 39-17771; AD 2014-04-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5108. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Pacific Aerospace Limited Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0090; Directorate Identifier 2014-CE-003-AD; Amendment 39-17761; AD 2014-04-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5109. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Services B.V.

Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0699; Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-198-AD; Amendment 39-17751; AD 2014-03-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5110. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; PIAGGIO AERO INDUSTRIES S.p.A Model Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0964; Directorate Identifier 2013-CE-035-AD; Amendment 39-17757; AD 2014-03-20] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5111. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0831; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-125-AD; Amendment 39-17763; AD 2014-04-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5112. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Slingsby Aviation Ltd. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0997; Directorate Identifier 2013-CE-044-AD; Amendment 39-17759; AD 2014-04-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5113. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0670; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-081-AD; Amendment 39-17756; AD 2014-03-19] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5114. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. Helicopters [Docket No.: FAA-2012-0886; Directorate Identifier 2008-SW-067-AD; Amendment 39-17738; AD 2014-03-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5115. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. Helicopters (Type Certificate Currently Held by Agusta Westland S.p.A) (Agusta Westland) [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0643; Directorate Identifier 2012-SW-096-AD; Amendment 39-17773; AD 2014-04-14] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5116. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Saab AB, Saab Aerosystems Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0695; Directorate Identifier 2011-NM-264-AD; Amendment 39-17726; AD 2014-01-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

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. HASTINGS of Washington (for himself, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. VALADAO):

H.R. 4315. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require publication on the Internet of the basis for determinations that species are endangered species or threatened species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. LUMMIS (for herself, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. VALADAO):

H.R. 4316. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to improve the disclosure of certain expenditures under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. NEUGEBAUER (for himself, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. VALADAO):

H.R. 4317. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require disclosure to States of the basis of determinations under such Act, to ensure use of information provided by State, tribal, and county governments in decisionmaking under such Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan (for himself, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. VALADAO):

H.R. 4318. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to conform citizen suits under that Act with other existing law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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. CRAWFORD (for himself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, and Mr. WOMACK):

H.R. 4319. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require the Secretary of the Interior to publish and make available for public comment a draft economic analysis at the time a proposed rule to designate critical habitat is published; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KLINE (for himself, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. SALMON, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. GOWDY, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. MESSER, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RIBBLE, and Mr. SCHWEIKERT):

H.R. 4320. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act with respect to the timing of elections and pre-election hearings and the identification of pre-election issues; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee (for himself, Mr. KLINE, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. SALMON, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. GOWDY, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. MESSER, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RIBBLE, and Mr. SCHWEIKERT):

H.R. 4321. A bill to amend the National labor Relations Act to require that lists of employees eligible to vote in organizing elections be provided to the National Labor Relations Board; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. MCKINLEY (for himself and Mr. RUSH):

H.R. 4322. A bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to provide for the payment to affected producers and their employees of duties that are collected pursuant to countervailing and antidumping duty orders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GOODLATTE (for himself, Ms. BASS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia):

H.R. 4323. A bill to reauthorize programs authorized under the Debbie Smith Act of 2004, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. NUGENT, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. COLE, Mrs. LUMMIS, and Mr. ENYART):

H.R. 4324. A bill to require adequate information regarding the tax treatment of payments under settlement agreements entered into by Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 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 Ms. ESTY (for herself, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. RUIZ, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 4325. A bill to prohibit the marketing of electronic cigarettes to children, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4326. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a refundable credit against income tax to assist individuals with high residential energy costs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York (for himself and Mr. GIBSON):

H.R. 4327. A bill to prohibit the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission from issuing certain decisions that will raise costs for ratepayers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. COLE (for himself, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska):

H.R. 4328. A bill to establish a program to award contracts to certain tribal organizations, Indian corporations, public school districts, and States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. PEARCE (for himself and Mr. COLE):

H.R. 4329. A bill to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. VELA, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, and Mr. GALLEGO):

H.R. 4330. A bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to ensure that the treatment

of illiquid swaps does not disadvantage certain non-financial end users who use them to manage business risk; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. BARROW of Georgia:

H.R. 4331. A bill to require a 50 percent reduction in the number of limousines in the Federal fleet; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. LONG, and Mr. COFFMAN):

H.R. 4332. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to increase the dollar limitation on the de minimis safe harbor from treatment as a capital expenditure for taxpayers without applicable financial statements; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. JENKINS (for herself, Mr. KIND, and Mr. YOUNG of Indiana):

H.R. 4333. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve 529 plans; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico (for herself and Mr. CARTWRIGHT):

H.R. 4334. A bill to allow homeowners facing foreclosure to avoid deficiency judgments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MAFFEI:

H.R. 4335. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify that the estate of a deceased veteran may receive certain accrued benefits upon the death of the veteran, to ensure that substituted claims are processed timely, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MICHAUD (for himself and Mr. RIBBLE):

H.R. 4336. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, with respect to the highway safety improvement program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4337. A bill to direct the Joint Committee on the Library to accept a statue depicting Pierre L'Enfant from the District of Columbia and to provide for the permanent display of the statue in the United States Capitol; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. RANGEL (for himself and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 4338. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require gas pipeline facilities to accelerate the repair, rehabilitation, and replacement of high-risk pipelines used in commerce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RANGEL (for himself and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 4339. A bill to establish State revolving loan funds to repair or replace natural gas distribution pipelines; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROKITA:

H.R. 4340. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, with respect to passenger motor vehicle crash avoidance information, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mrs. CAPPS, and Mr. DEUTCH):

H.R. 4341. A bill to direct the Federal Trade Commission to submit to Congress a report on the use, in advertising and other media for the promotion of commercial products, of images that have been altered to materially change the physical characteristics of the faces and bodies of the individuals depicted; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SHIMKUS (for himself, Mr. ROKITA, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. LATTA, Mr. BARTON, and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

H.R. 4342. A bill to prohibit the National Telecommunications and Information Administration from relinquishing responsibility over the Internet domain name system until the Comptroller General of United States submits to Congress a report on the role of the NTIA with respect to such system; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. STOCKMAN:

H.R. 4343. A bill to end the unconstitutional delegation of legislative power which was exclusively vested in the Senate and House of Representatives by Article I, Section 1 of the United States Constitution, and to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to issue a report to Congress detailing the extent of the problem of unconstitutional delegation to the end that such delegations can be phased out, thereby restoring the constitutional principle of separation of powers set forth in the first sections of the United States Constitution; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. TITUS (for herself, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. KUSTER, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. TONKO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. O'ROURKE, and Ms. JACKSON LEE):

H.R. 4344. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a presumption of service connection for mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TONKO:

H.R. 4345. A bill to reauthorize the weatherization and State energy programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. TURNER (for himself, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. MICA, and Mr. DIAZ-BALART):

H.R. 4346. A bill to encourage continued enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. SPEIER (for herself, Mr. BARBER, Ms. BASS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. HECK of Washington, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. CHU, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. CLAY, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FARR, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. HAHN, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HIMES, Mr. HOLT, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HOYER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KIND, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Ms. MOORE, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PETERS of California, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. POCAN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. SIRES, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. TIERNEY, Ms. TITUS, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. PALLONE, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, and Ms. MATSUI):

H.J. Res. 113. A joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LOEBSACK (for himself, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. NADLER, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. NORTON, Mr. VELA, Mr. JOYCE, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. ENYART, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. REED, Mr. LATTA, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. SHIMKUS):

H. Res. 526. A resolution recognizing the important work of the Meals On Wheels Association of America and its member programs throughout the country in addressing senior hunger and improving the quality of life for millions of our nation's seniors each year; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. HONDA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. HAHN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, and Mr. VELA):

H. Res. 527. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Public Health Week; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BACHUS (for himself, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. BYRNE):

H. Res. 528. A resolution expressing support for designation of March 2014 as ''National Multiple Myeloma Awareness Month''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. CÁRDENAS (for himself, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. SIRES, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. HONDA, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. PASTOR of Arizona,

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. GARCIA, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. VEASEY, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. MOORE, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. FARR, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. HORSFORD):

H. Res. 529. A resolution recognizing March 31 as César Chávez Day in honor of the accomplishments and legacy of César Estrada Chávez; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, memorials were presented and referred as follows:

178. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, relative to House Resolution No. 305 supporting a complete hydrologic separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

179. Also, a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, relative to House Resolution No. 300 memorializing the Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to take a stronger role in investigating and eliminating delays in veterans' health care; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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. HASTINGS of Washington:

H.R. 4315.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 18 of the United States Constitution: 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 Mrs. LUMMIS:

H.R. 4316.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 18 of the United States Constitution: 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. NEUGEBAUER:

H.R. 4317.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18.

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. HUIZENGA of Michigan:

H.R. 4318.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

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. CRAWFORD:

H.R. 4319.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the enumerated powers listed in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. KLINE:

H.R. 4320.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee:

H.R. 4321.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. MCKINLEY:

H.R. 4322.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

According to Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution: The Congress shall have power to enact this legislation to lay and collect duties and to regulate Commerce with foreign nations.

By Mr. GOODLATTE:

H.R. 4323.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The authority to enact this bill is derived from, but may not be limited to, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 4324.

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 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, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. ESTY:

H.R. 4325.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4326.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 4327.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. COLE:

H.R. 4328.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

• This bill is enacted pursuant to Article I, Section 8 which grants Congress the power to regulate Commerce with the Indian Tribes.

• This bill is enacted pursuant to Article II, Section 2, Clause 2 in order the enforce treaties made between the United States and several Indian Tribes.

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 4329.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 4330.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution, as this legislation regulates commerce with foreign nations, between the states, and with Indian Tribes.

By Mr. BARROW of Georgia:

H.R. 4331.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. GARDNER:

H.R. 4332.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1, Section 8 of Article I 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.''

By Ms. JENKINS:

H.R. 4333.

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 to the United States Constitution.

By Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico:

H.R. 4334.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article One of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. MAFFEI:

H.R. 4335.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I. Section 8.

By Mr. MICHAUD:

H.R. 4336.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4337.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: clause 2 of section 3 of Article IV of the Constitution.

By Mr. RANGEL:

H.R. 4338.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. RANGEL:

H.R. 4339.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. ROKITA:

H.R. 4340.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States that states ''The Congress shall have Power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN:

H.R. 4341.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. SHIMKUS:

H.R. 4342.

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. STOCKMAN:

H.R. 4343.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

(a) Article I, Section 1 of the United States Constitution vests the legislative powers enumerated therein in the United States Congress, consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives, subject only to the veto power of the President as provided in Article I, Section 7, Clause 2.

(b) Article II, Section 1 of the United States Constitution vests the executive power of the United States in a President of the United States, except as enumerated in Article II, Section 2.

(c) Article III, Section 1 of the United States Constitution vests the judicial power of the United States in ''one supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish,'' subject only to the jurisdictional limitations set forth in Article III, Section 2.

By Ms. TITUS:

H.R. 4344.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Amendment XVI, of the United States Constitution

By Mr. TONKO:

H.R. 4345.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 1,

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

By Mr. TURNER:

H.R. 4346.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 12, 13, 14 and 18 of the Constitution.

By Ms. SPEIER:

H.J. Res. 113.

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 of the United States Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 182: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 312: Mr. TIERNEY and Ms. HAHN.

H.R. 401: Mr. JOLLY.

H.R. 482: Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.R. 494: Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.

H.R. 594: Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 645: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 648: Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HONDA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, and Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 769: Mr. BERA of California.

H.R. 795: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.

H.R. 1146: Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PALAZZO, and Mr. CHABOT.

H.R. 1176: Mr. STIVERS.

H.R. 1239: Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas.

H.R. 1240: Mr. LIPINSKI and Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 1313: Ms. DELBENE.

H.R. 1502: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 1563: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 1603: Mr. SIRES.

H.R. 1629: Mr. MCDERMOTT.

H.R. 1652: Mr. PASTOR of Arizona.

H.R. 1779: Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.

H.R. 1812: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 1996: Mr. TIERNEY.

H.R. 2001: Mr. GARAMENDI and Mr. MCDERMOTT.

H.R. 2146: Mr. HOLT.

H.R. 2366: Mr. MEEKS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. NORTON, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, and Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.

H.R. 2377: Mr. ENYART.

H.R. 2452: Ms. HAHN.

H.R. 2527: Ms. CHU.

H.R. 2591: Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, and Mr. GIBSON.

H.R. 2662: Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. MOORE, and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 2663: Mr. CONNOLLY.

H.R. 2697: Mr. WAXMAN.

H.R. 2737: Ms. SCHWARTZ.

H.R. 2750: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 2892: Mr. PITTENGER.

H.R. 2901: Mr. SOUTHERLAND, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. POLIS, Ms. CHU, and Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.R. 2932: Mr. BERA of California, Mr. COOPER, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. MENG, Mr. PETERS of Michigan, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. SOUTHERLAND.

H.R. 2939: Mr. SALMON, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. ISSA, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. ENYART, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, and Mr. HOYER.

H.R. 2959: Mr. HENSARLING, Ms. GRANGER, and Mr. SHIMKUS.

H.R. 2994: Mr. CÁRDENAS and Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.

H.R. 3086: Mr. ISSA, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. MICA, Mr. NUNES, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, and Mr. MORAN.

H.R. 3162: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 3179: Mr. FARENTHOLD.

H.R. 3371: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 3481: Mr. ENYART.

H.R. 3508: Mr. GRIMM.

H.R. 3563: Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 3583: Mr. CHABOT.

H.R. 3600: Mr. SCHOCK and Mr. ENYART.

H.R. 3601: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 3602: Mr. WAXMAN.

H.R. 3610: Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H.R. 3658: Mr. TIPTON, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. ESTY, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. CLAY, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. TONKO, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. HARPER, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, and Mr. BYRNE.

H.R. 3670: Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois and Mr. WELCH.

H.R. 3673: Mr. AMODEI, Mr. MARCHANT and Mr. LANCE.

H.R. 3681: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 3698: Mr. REICHERT.

H.R. 3708: Ms. DUCKWORTH and Mr. FARENTHOLD.

H.R. 3717: Mr. CLAY, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. RUSH, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 3725: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 3782: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 3793: Mr. VEASEY.

H.R. 3852: Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. GRAYSON.

H.R. 3930: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. JENKINS, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, and Mr. AMODEI.

H.R. 4012: Mr. FLORES and Mr. BARTON.

H.R. 4031: Mr. BOUSTANY.

H.R. 4041: Mr. DEUTCH.

H.R. 4060: Mr. MARCHANT.

H.R. 4107: Ms. LEE of California, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 4119: Ms. HAHN and Mr. ENYART.

H.R. 4139: Mr. COLLINS of New York.

H.R. 4149: Mr. WALZ.

H.R. 4157: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.

H.R. 4158: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.

H.R. 4167: Mr. HIGGINS.

H.R. 4183: Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.

H.R. 4187: Mr. BUCSHON, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, and Ms. JENKINS.

H.R. 4200: Mr. PAULSEN.

H.R. 4225: Mr. COTTON, Mr. LANCE, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. GIBSON.

H.R. 4227: Mr. HUFFMAN and Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 4229: Mr. MCCAUL.

H.R. 4250: Mr. FARR, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, and Mr. BARR.

H.R. 4257: Mr. RIBBLE and Mr. HUNTER.

H.R. 4261: Mr. STIVERS and Mr. O'ROURKE.

H.R. 4269: Mr. HOLT.

H.R. 4285: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 4286: Mr. JORDAN.

H.R. 4304: Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. STEWART.

H.R. 4305: Ms. TSONGAS and Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.J. Res. 101: Mr. SANFORD.

H. Con. Res. 86: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.

H. Con. Res. 87: Mr. LATTA.

H. Con. Res. 94: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. MCKEON, and Mr. COOK.

H. Con. Res. 95: Mr. COBLE, Mr. JONES, and Mr. MCINTYRE.

H. Res. 284: Mr. BROUN of Georgia and Mr. MURPHY of Florida.

H. Res. 412: Ms. TSONGAS.

H. Res. 456: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H. Res. 480: Mr. HIGGINS.

H. Res. 494: Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. HARRIS, Ms. ESTY, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.

H. Res. 505: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

74. The SPEAKER presented a petition of the City of Cudahy, California, relative to Resolution No. 14-07 endorsing comprehensive immigration reform in the United States House of Representatives during the current legislative year; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2014 No. 49

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN E. WALSH, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, we would rest in You, who alone can bring order to our world. Reveal yourself to our Senators, guiding them on the path of peace. May they place behind them disappointed hopes as they lean on You for comfort and strength. Lord, rebuke their doubts, strengthen the good in them so that nothing may hinder the outflow of Your power in their lives. Direct them to make a commitment to work together for Your glory.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 27, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN E. WALSH, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WALSH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 333.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 333, H.R. 3979, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO PETER D. ROBINSON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have said often that people who work here in the Capitol are some of the most intelligent men and women anyplace in the world. They come here—as I explained to a group of people from Nevada this morning—dedicated to public service. They are not here to see how much money they can make. They are here to change people's lives. Today, the Senate is losing one of its brightest and most seasoned minds.

A lawyer by trade, Pete Robinson came to the Senate in 2002. I knew Pete because he had worked in the House previously, when I served over there. I knew him as someone I always admired—people who are good runners. I saw Pete out running and I was amazed at his gracefulness and speed. I did a lot of running. I wasn't very graceful and didn't have a lot of speed, but I did a lot of running. Pete was the captain of his high school cross-country team. He was a good athlete, which I admire very much.

From the moment he came to the Senate, the Office of Parliamentarian became a better place. He was as close to being indispensable as anyone. He has an incredible work ethic and tremendous experience—having been the Parliamentarian in the House and here and having been in the private sector. He has a great memory and has made the Senate function as it should. Not many people can make that claim, especially today. So he will be missed. I will miss him personally.

I love to joke with him and talk to him about his running days, like I talk about my running days, as if we were both still out running. But that is what life is all about. We look back at the things that we did. I am sure, just as the Presiding Officer knows, things you do as a younger man become better every day, and that is the way I look back on my athletic endeavors in that regard. Of course, talking just about myself, maybe I wasn't as good as I thought I was, but that didn't matter at the time. It made me feel good, and that is what athletics is all about—trying to build character.

So Pete is going to be missed in his retirement, but he is going to have plenty to do. He has lots of hobbies: an avid gardener, a good cook—some say an amateur chef. I won't go that far, but he is a good cook, as I understand it. He can make his own furniture. So he is going to keep busy feeding and furnishing his wife Connie, their daughter Tara, son-in-law Ethan, and grandson Milo with the good things he has done.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Printed on recycled paper.

We will truly miss him. I appreciate his courtesies all the time to me, and, as far as I know, to everyone else.

SCHEDULE

Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority the final half.

Following morning business, the Senate will proceed to H.R. 4152. At noon there will be up to three rollcall votes: the Menendez-Corker substitute, passage of the Ukraine bill, and confirmation of Maria Contreras-Sweet to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Last night I filed cloture on John Owens to be a U.S. circuit judge, and on the motion to proceed to the legislative vehicle for the unemployment insurance bill. Under the rule the first cloture vote will be tomorrow morning.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO PETER D. ROBINSON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to say a word about our longtime colleague Peter Robinson, who is retiring this week.

Peter joined the Office of the Senate Parliamentarian in 2002 and quickly distinguished himself as a standout talent. He brought a remarkable breadth of knowledge to a job that really requires it and a legendary facility for reading and digesting complex legislation in record time. His colleagues describe him as kind of a genius, actually—somebody who can remember not only where he read something but the exact page on which he read it. According to Senate legend, one staffer actually showed up one day asking for the software program that he just assumed Peter had been using to analyze complex bills. He was that fast. He was that good.

Peter has all sorts of interests and hobbies, so I am sure he will make very good use of his retirement, but he will be missed around here. Pete's colleagues will miss his professional skill and mastery of precedent and procedure, but they will also miss the good humor and the equanimity which have made him such a great colleague and such a valuable and respected member of the Senate family over the years. We wish Peter all the best.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

UKRAINE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today is an important day for Ukraine and for all nations supporting international law, democracy, and decency. Later today the Senate will pass a bipartisan bill that provides much needed aid to stabilize Ukraine's economy.

For those Russian leaders who have played a role in the destabilization of Ukraine, this legislation contains much needed repercussions against them. Remember, Russia is run by an oligarchy. One of the oligarchs is the President of that country—Putin. This bill is a reality check to him that the United States will not stand idly by while Russia plays the role of schoolyard bully.

It seems to me that President Putin does not understand the way the world works today. It is almost as if Putin yearns for the days of Joseph Stalin. Times have changed since Stalin was around, the world has changed since Stalin was around, and it has changed for the better. The Cold War is over, along with fixtures such as the Iron Curtain, dueling superpowers, and brinksmanship. Yet it is almost as if Putin is living in a time warp. Russia's place in the world has transformed. It does not wield the global power it once did. The rest of the world has changed since Stalin's era, with other countries in leading roles.

But the United States of America remains a beacon of hope to the whole world. Our economic, our military, our political power, and our influence are strong because we stand for freedom, democracy, and economic prosperity. Russia, on the other hand, led by this man who yearns for Stalin, is a nation of immense resources and potential for good. Yet they have chosen to wield its influence solely for self-interests.

Earlier this week President Obama said the following about Russia:

> Russia is a regional power that is threatening some of its immediate neighbors—not out of strength, but out of weakness. The fact that Russia felt compelled to go in militarily and lay bare these violations of international law indicates less influence, not more.

President Obama is absolutely correct. Instead of using its influence to bring stability to neighboring countries, Putin has instead played the role of an antagonist. Look at what has taken place in Crimea and the country of Georgia. For what does Russia stand? For what does President Putin stand?

As the world gets closer and closer to looking at Putin, it doesn't like what it sees. The product of Putin's two decades in leadership seems to be a disregard for national law, more corruption, and increased suppression of basic human rights. While countless of his own citizens have rallied in the streets pleading for more freedom, Putin and his cronies have concerned themselves with getting richer—not only with power but with money. These oligarchs have been ruthless in protecting their power and their money.

Inside and outside of Russia, the President of Russia has displayed a penchant for being a bully. He imprisons political rivals and locks them up. He seizes the wealth from Russians who have displeased him. If they don't say or do exactly what he wants, he puts them in jail and takes their wealth. He has singlehandedly rolled back years of progress on equality. He has endorsed the persecution of his own country's gay and lesbian community. And once again he has invaded and occupied a nation for choosing democracy. Are these acts of a statesman? No. They are acts of a bully.

As billions tuned in to the Olympics, I believe few were deluded by the fake veneer of Putin's Sochi show. In fact, all we saw was that Putin's Russia isn't working.

I say every time I get on the floor that if he so likes the vote that took place in Crimea, why doesn't he have a vote of the people in Chechnya? Everyone knows why.

I say to Mr. Putin: Operating by intimidation and belligerence will not work. In today's world, nations should work together through diplomacy and the rule of law.

He has a choice to come back into the international community and honor international law or to continue to isolate Russia.

Russian troops continue to mass at the border of Ukraine, but he should understand this: The consequences for his continued bullying will not end today and certainly not with this bill. His chest-thumping aggression is leading Russia only to isolation and irrelevance.

My colleagues and I will continue to work to strengthen Ukraine's Government and its 46 million people. The bill before the Senate today sanctions and further isolates Putin and his inner circle. What we are doing here today is just the beginning.

I support this legislation, and I am proud of my Senate colleagues who join in standing for the people of Ukraine. This is what we are doing.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

REAL SOLUTIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I will start by acknowledging the majority leader's candor yesterday in outlining his party's agenda for the rest of the year—in admitting he actually asked his party's ''political arm,'' the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, to come up with it. Maybe he didn't intend to admit that his party's so-called agenda is actually a political gambit or that it basically has one intent—to bail out imperiled Democrats, Democrats desperate to distract from how ObamaCare is devastating the middle class—but it slipped out anyway.

But that wasn't the only Freudian slip we heard at yesterday's press conference. Here is a quote from one of the majority leader's top lieutenants:

> When we play the political games that we're playing here, [middle-class families] feel that we are detached from their priorities.

Boy, I couldn't agree more with that. Maybe that is why even the press isn't taking this ''agenda'' seriously. The New York Times reported that helping struggling Americans is ''not really the point'' of Democrats' agenda and that a main goal is actually just ''to motivate the Democratic base'' and drive turnout in places they need to win in November. The Times also noted that the show votes associated with the Democratic agenda ''will be timed to coincide with campaign-style trips [by the President].'' According to the Washington Post, ''Democrats hope to use the votes . . . as fodder . . . in hopes of staving off potential losses in several states.''

Look, it doesn't get any more cynical than that—to demonstrate such a total lack of seriousness in such troubling times for the middle class.

At this point Washington Democrats are in the sixth year of trying to fix the economy, and the middle class continues to suffer. It is just not working.

As I have been saying for months now, this presents Washington Democrats with a choice. One option they have is to try something different. This means coming to the middle and working with us on bipartisan solutions that can create jobs, increase take-home pay, and give a leg up to the middle class. The other option is to double down on failed ideology and political gimmicks—the kinds of things that get the Democrats' leftwing base all excited.

In short, Washington Democrats have a choice between helping the middle class and pleasing the left. So when they release a poll-tested, campaign-crafted ObamaCare distraction ''agenda'' packed to the brim with ''lefty show votes,'' I think middle-class families can tell whose side Washington Democrats are really on. It is certainly not their side.

The people we represent all deserve better than this. They are hurting, really hurting, and all Washington Democrats seem to have for them is a bunch of show votes. I mean, how will show votes help our constituents? How will they help the people who have been writing to me about the impact of ObamaCare on themselves and their families?

One woman who wrote me from Louisville had been enrolled in Kentucky's high-risk pool for people with preexisting conditions. She said she had been battling cancer for years and that in 2012 her cancer metastasized and moved into her liver, pelvis, lung, and diaphragm. Just imagine hearing devastating news like that. Now imagine hearing a year or so later that you are going to lose the insurance you liked too, insurance that had helped you manage your cancer treatment, and, worse, that your new ObamaCare plan was going to classify your chemo medicine as a specialty drug that costs more than $1,000 for a 3-week supply. ObamaCare, this constituent wrote, ''is about as helpful in saving my life as a wet paper sack to help cover me from the rain.''

I would note she contacted me because she wanted me to know that ObamaCare stories like hers are anything but ''lies,'' despite what some in this Chamber might imply.

Does anyone really think constituents like her care about some show vote? No. What she needs is relief from ObamaCare.

So does another Kentuckian, who wrote me from Henderson County, whose premium will jump $400 a month to over $1,100 a month under ObamaCare. He wrote:

> Americans were told that we could . . . keep our existing policy [if we chose]. . . . Not only was [this] a lie—[it's] a lie that will cost me an additional $700 per month!

How is a political show vote going to help him? Of course it isn't. And there is not a thing the Democratic Party's ''political arm'' can do to fix these problems.

Kentuckians and countless Americans suffering under ObamaCare need real solutions—not gimmicks, not base-pleasing ideology. Solutions are what is needed. Look, Washington Democrats forced America's middle class into this impossible situation. They basically blocked every reasonable attempt to reform this law or to change it in any meaningful way. Yet now ObamaCare is becoming politically difficult for them. They are deflecting blame. Just this morning we saw several imperiled Obama Democrats spin an op-ed that underscores the point, but Americans are not going to be fooled by any of this. Americans agree it is time for Washington Democrats to work with us to remedy the mess they created, and that means repealing this law and replacing it with real reform.

It is time for them to work with us on a real jobs agenda too, and to take up the numerous bills the House has already sent over and get them onto the President's desk.

Americans are fed up with the games and the tricks. They want serious solutions. They don't need a campaign poster to figure that out, and Republicans believe it is about time the American people got those solutions.

REMEMBERING SERGEANT MICHAEL C. CABLE

Mr. President, I want to pay tribute to a Kentucky soldier who tragically has been lost while serving his country. SGT Michael C. Cable of Philpot, KY, was killed by the enemy while guarding American and Afghan officials in Afghanistan on March 27, 2013, exactly 1 year ago today. He was 26 years old.

For his service in uniform, Sergeant Cable received several awards, medals, and decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, the Iraq Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal, the Combat Action Badge, and the Air Assault Badge.

A decade ago as a high school student, Michael was a star on the Daviess County High School cross-country team, and they won many races. ''I sent out an e-mail this morning with this Bible verse,'' says Tony Rowe, Michael's former high school coach.

> ''Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'' He is a hero. He died fighting for us and trying to make life better for the people of Afghanistan.

What Tony Rowe says about Michael is absolutely true, and in fact the most important thing that Michael's family wants the world to understand is that Michael was performing a mission at the time he was attacked, and this important mission was protecting others. It was not only highly important work but highly dangerous.

Before leaving on his final deployment, Michael pulled his family members aside to warn them his mission would be dangerous. ''He was prepared before he left for anything that happened,'' said Raymond Johnston, Michael's older brother. In that conversation Michael described his sisters and a close family friend as the most important people in his life, and he asked his family to take care of them if anything happened to him.

It is very hard. He was my little buddy. He wanted to make sure that no matter what, we continued to enjoy life. And we are trying to do that.

Michael's tragic loss was the first combat death for the 101st Airborne Division, based in Fort Campbell, KY, for that deployment to Afghanistan. He joined the Army in August 2007 and arrived at Fort Campbell in December of 2010. He served as a fire support specialist.

In his family Michael was known as a prankster. His last big prank was pulled on his younger sister Idalis. Michael promised he would buy Idalis a car. He had his older sister Wendy tell Idalis that Michael was determined to make good on his word but that he had bought her a really old and ugly car. Wendy told Idalis she would have to act excited so as not to hurt Michael's feelings. Far from a beat-up clunker, Michael gave his sister his own Jeep Cherokee just before he deployed to Afghanistan.

Michael loved sports of all kinds. He played golf to relax and won a golf tournament at Fort Campbell. His favorite professional sports team was the Green Bay Packers.

Michael had planned to leave the Army after his tour in Afghanistan to open his own home remodeling business. His family remembers Michael as always busy spending time with friends.

We are thinking about Michael's family today, including his parents, Vickie and Raymond Johnston, his siblings Raymond, Lisa, Wendy, Kennedy,

and Idalis, and many other beloved family members and friends.

I would like the family of SGT Michael C. Cable to know this Senate recognizes that Sergeant Cable was doing his job, and we are filled with gratitude. Without the men and women brave enough to wear our country's uniform and do the jobs our country asks them to do, I fear for what would become of our Nation.

I know my colleagues join me in honoring Sergeant Cable for his life of service and for his tragic sacrifice, and I extend my deepest condolences to Michael's family for their loss 1 year ago today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m. Senators are permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half.

The Senator from South Dakota.

MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday the Democrats in the Senate held a news conference in which they rolled out their agenda, which has been described differently by different news organizations. The headline from the Washington Examiner said: ''Majority threatened, Democrats take up populace agenda to distract from ObamaCare.'' The Wall Street Journal headline said: ''Senate Democrats try to change subject from ObamaCare.'' The New York Times in reporting on that story, their headline was: ''Democrats, as Part of Midterm Strategy to Schedule Votes on Pocketbook Issues.'' So that was a little more, perhaps, flattering headline.

In the story in the New York Times, it goes on to say:

> The proposals have little chance of passing. But Democrats concede that making new laws is not really the point. Rather, they are trying to force Republicans to vote against them.

Later on in the story, the New York Times goes on to say:

> Part of the goal is to energize the Democratic base, which will be crucial to turnout in the more conservative states where the party needs to win this year.

So everybody kind of gets the joke that this is really about the midterm elections. The agenda the Democrats are now rolling out is designed to try to create a distraction away from their economic record and from ObamaCare.

It is interesting to me because the Democrats have been the majority in the Senate now for 8 years. So you would think by now this sort of an agenda would have been inactive. In fact, for a few years they had a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate. They had 60 votes and could do literally anything they wanted. Most of these items now are being rolled out because it is, as I said, an election year, and they are saying: These are things that we can do for the American people.

Well, I think the American people are saying enough already. You have done enough to us. Please don't do any more.

The agenda is being described as a fair shot for everyone. Well, I think the American people, perhaps, don't see it as a shot for them as they do a shot at them.

If you look at the last several years as any indication of that, it hasn't worked very well. The agenda that has been advanced by the Democrats here in the Senate and by the President of the United States has left us with a sluggish economy, chronic high unemployment, massive amounts of debt, the lowest labor participation rate, literally, that we have seen in 35 years. In fact, last year the economy grew at 0.9 percent. So you have this sluggish economy sputtering along, and the American people are asking: Where are the jobs? Where is the take-home pay?

Since the President took office, household income in this country has gone down—not up—by $3,700 per family. If you look at all the policies put in place by the Democratic majority, there isn't really anything that you could point to that helps create jobs mainly because it is heavy handed, top-down management from Washington, DC.

The American people need policies that will unleash the American free enterprise system and unleash the entrepreneurs and small businesses that would allow them to grow this economy and expand this economy. That is better for everyone. Every middle-class American in this country wants a better quality of life, a better standard of life for their children and grandchildren than what they have experienced. This may be the first generation of Americans where this is not true. Why? Because policies in Washington, DC, make it more difficult, more expensive, to create jobs.

You can go down the list. If you look at ObamaCare, according to the Congressional Budget Office, ObamaCare is going to result in 2.5 million fewer full-time workers. According to the CBO, there will be 2.5 million fewer full-time workers over the next decade and $1 trillion in lower wages. Fewer jobs and lower take-home pay is what we are seeing as a result of the policies that have been put in place by the Democratic majority in the Senate and by the President of the United States.

Yesterday there was another announcement about yet another delay of ObamaCare—which will be, I think, the 30th delay that we have seen so far with regard to that legislation. In speaking about that delay, the majority leader of the Senate said yesterday that he thought the delay was necessary because people weren't educated enough about how to use the Internet. Only in Washington, DC—only in Washington, DC—do you see politicians blaming the American people for their failures because that is essentially what the ObamaCare legislation is. By and large I think most people would conclude it just isn't working. It didn't add up in the first place, and it is not working.

It is creating fewer jobs, higher premiums, higher deductibles, lower take-home pay for the American people, fewer choices for doctors and hospitals, and the idea that it is the fault of the American people because they are not educated enough to use the Internet—my dad is 94 years old. He lives in my hometown of Myrtle, SD, a town of about 500 people. He uses the Internet every single day.

I don't think the problem is the Internet or that people in this country aren't educated enough to use the Internet. I think it has a lot more to do with the fact that incompetence here in Washington, DC, led to a failed rollout that confused millions of Americans. That is not the responsibility of, nor should we blame, the American people for that. That is government trying to do big things and not doing them well. The government doesn't do complicated things very well.

So when you hear of the new agenda coming out from the Democratic majority in the Senate, that we are going to do this for the American people; we are going to do that for the American people and talk about a minimum wage increase—again, you have a Congressional Budget Office saying that raising the minimum wage by 40 percent, which is what is being proposed, would, in fact, cost the economy up to a million jobs and also would raise prices.

It is going to raise prices on the people that will be hurt the most by price increases—lower-income Americans. Instead of putting policies in place that cost the American economy jobs, we ought to be looking at things that actually create jobs.

We have a proposal called the Keystone Pipeline which the President's own State Department has said would create 42,000 jobs. So those are real jobs, shovel-ready jobs that would be available today. Instead we want to put policies in place that are actually going to cost the economy jobs. If you're an American citizen out there and you hear Washington, DC, is going to do more for you, yet again, you have got to be saying: Whoa, you know, hold the phone. We have seen enough of that already. We have seen this picture before, and we have seen what results when the government tries to do big and complicated things. It just doesn't work very well.

The Web site rollout is a perfect example of that, as is the 2,700-page

ObamaCare legislation followed by about 25,000 pages of regulations, which people in this country have to try and discern and figure out.

I would submit that there are things that will create jobs. We know the Keystone Pipeline will create jobs. Passing trade promotion authority and allowing our trade negotiators to create more market opportunities for small businesses and farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs in this country and around the world will create jobs. Passing trade promotion authority and getting the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the European trade agreement enacted they say will expose American businesses to 1 billion new consumers worldwide. Those are the types of things that do create jobs, and we know that.

Instead of having an election year agenda that is transparently stated to be that, why don't we actually talk about things that will create jobs and will improve the overall standard of living for people in this country?

I would make one other observation, and that is another thing coming out of the administration right now, which will be incredibly harmful to the economy and make it very difficult for lower income and middle-class Americans to make ends meet, are policies coming out of the EPA that are going to drive the cost of energy. Energy is an important input. It is a huge factor in places such as South Dakota where we have a cold-weather climate and an agricultural-based economy. We travel long distances to get places. When you talk about raising the cost of energy in a State such as South Dakota, you are significantly increasing the cost of doing business in a way that will make it more difficult and more expensive to create the jobs we need, get people back to work, and get the economy growing at a faster rate. These things are harmful to job growth.

I talked to a bunch of small businesses in my State last week and asked them about some of these policies. I asked them: What are the biggest obstacles right now to your success and what are things that could be done that would actually be helpful?

Of course, ObamaCare is something that immediately comes up, but also the whole issue of the minimum wage. The smallest business owner I talked to I believe had 30 employees and the largest had maybe a little over 200 employees. They said, look, this is a job killer. What that means is we are not going to be able to hire as many people. It adds significant higher operating costs every year to our businesses and makes it more difficult to create the jobs for the people who actually need those jobs, most of whom, in a lot of these places, are going to be young people who are trying to get that first job and make their way up the economic ladder.

There are lots of things we could talk about that do address the problem rather than just addressing the symptoms, and we want to vote on an extension. We are going to vote on an extension of unemployment insurance, which will be the thirteenth time we have done that. When you go through an economic downturn, obviously there is a need to help people who have lost jobs and been displaced in the economy. But when are we going to start focusing on the problem rather than the symptom?

The problem is we have almost 4 million Americans who have been unemployed for more than 6 months. We ought to be looking at what we can do to create jobs for the people who don't have jobs in our economy. I have introduced an amendment to the unemployment insurance legislation, which I don't think is going to get voted on, that has some simple solutions.

One of those things is to waive the employer mandate for any employer who hires somebody who has been unemployed for more than 6 months. So if you are a long-term unemployed person and an employer hires that person, you get a waiver from the employer mandate which could save an employer several thousand dollars a year. It also calls for a 6-month payroll tax holiday for employers, which if you have a $40,000-a-year employee on your payroll, you would save about $2,400. You could save $4,000, $5,000, or $6,000 a year in the cost of hiring someone with those two suggestions. Another suggestion is to allow people to have access to low-interest loans—up to $10,000—to relocate to places where there is lower unemployment.

My State of South Dakota is looking for workers. When I travel through my communities, we can't find workers. One of the biggest obstacles for people to get to jobs is to relocate. If we gave them a low-interest loan that would allow them to move to places where there is low unemployment and where there are jobs, it would make a lot of sense.

Finally, it adopts the SKILLS Act that has passed the House of Representatives, which consolidates 35 Federal programs into 9 programs so you don't have all of this duplication and overlap in all of these Federal programs for worker training and shifts that resource out to the States where States can design programs that actually prepare and equip the people in their States for the jobs that are available.

Those are the types of solutions we ought to be talking about rather than top-down, heavyhanded, government-driven solutions that make it more difficult to create jobs and is equivalent to throwing a big wet blanket on the American economy at the time we can least afford it.

My State of South Dakota is a good example. We have balanced our budget every year since 1889. We have zero personal income tax, zero corporate income tax, and we have a very well-trained, hard-working, educated workforce. We have a good climate for doing business with a light regulatory touch. We have a low unemployment rate and a vibrant economy mainly because we understand that it isn't the government that creates jobs.

When the Senate Democrats and the President come out with the election-year, poll-tested agenda, which is clearly driven simply to try to generate votes in the midterm elections rather than actually solve the problems—and it says that in the stories. The stories are very transparent about what they are trying to do. We ought to be focused on things that actually create jobs, such as passing the Keystone Pipeline, passing trade promotion authority, and looking at real solutions that do more than just treat symptoms, and actually get at the problems.

The problem is we have too many people in this economy who have been unemployed for a long period of time. We need to get them back to work and get the economy growing faster than 1.9 percent a year. If we get growth back up to 3 or 4 percent a year, it will dramatically change the future for middle-class families in this country, and that is what we ought to be focused on.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mrs. MURRAY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2164 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

PROVIDING FOR THE COSTS OF LOAN GUARANTEES FOR UKRAINE

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4152, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4152) to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine.

Pending:

Reid (for Menendez/Corker) amendment No. 2867, to provide a complete substitute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their assigned designees.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time under quorum calls be equally divided between the majority and the minority.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to urge my colleagues to support the bipartisan agreement I have reached with five of our colleagues from across the aisle Senators HELLER, COLLINS, PORTMAN, MURKOWSKI, and KIRK to provide emergency unemployment insurance to 2.7 million Americans. This commonsense, bipartisan agreement is one of the many things the Senate should do to help create jobs and strengthen our Nation's economy so it works for every American, so everyone has a fair shot. So I hope my colleagues will join with us and pass this bill quickly so it can be taken up for a vote in the House.

The individual and economic consequences of a lapse of these unemployment insurance funds are very clear. I have described many times, and my colleagues have come to the floor many times, and indicated the individual cases where people who have worked for years found themselves without a job, through no fault of their own, desperately needing some modest assistance—and these benefits are about $300 to $350 a week—just to keep going, to keep looking for work, to keep trying to be part of the workforce, which they desperately want to do. We have shared these stories. These individual hardships ripple across our entire economy.

Indeed, the Congressional Budget Office and other economists looking at this, not from the individual perspective but from the overall economy, find this is one of the most effective ways to keep the economy moving forward. The CBO has indeed estimated our failure so far to extend benefits through 2014 would cost the economy 200,000 jobs. That is simply as a result of these payments to individuals going right back into the economy. It stimulates other workers who have work and creates demand.

So restoring economic assistance for Americans who have lost their jobs and who are trying to find new ones is not only the right thing to do, but it is also the smart thing to do for our economy. That is why I have been pressing for an extension of these benefits over a longer period of time. But, we have reached a principled compromise—and I have to underscore the word ''compromise''—to do it over a 5-month period, with some retroactive and some, if we move quickly enough, prospective. But it is frustrating to realize that some in Congress don't want to do this. I think that is unfortunate not only because of the effect it has on individual constituents but also because it is going to adversely affect our economy. It is not going to add jobs. In fact, as CBO suggests, it could indeed take away jobs.

Let me take a few moments to address some of the arguments being raised, particularly in the House of Representatives, as to why they can't support this. Basically, it comes from the notion that: Well, this is too hard to implement. Even if you concede these benefits are absolutely important, they would provide economic stimulus, we just can't implement them.

These concerns were highlighted by a letter from the National Association of State Workforce Agencies. But all of these concerns are addressable. Indeed, the Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, has addressed these concerns point by point in a recent letter, and he has, importantly, committed to work collaboratively with the States—as has been the case in all of the 12 extensions or expansions of this program since the great recession—to do this.

We have repeatedly extended this program. There have been periods of time where there has been a gap between extensions, and they have had to look backwards, these State administrators. Secretary Perez is committed to do all he can and have all the efforts of the Department so this can be implemented successfully, and I am confident it can and he is confident it can.

But there were four basic assertions that were made that I want to address.

First, NASWA indicated that, well, States are struggling with antiquated computer systems that make it hard to implement changes quickly. Well, the States have received over the past 5 years $345 million to modernize their unemployment insurance systems. That is Federal money going to States so they can fix their computer systems. So this is not exactly an area we have neglected in terms of helping them modernize their computer systems. Complex program changes we have made in the past—I was part of the effort in 2012 to extend unemployment compensation benefits—and we made some significant changes. We reduced the total number of weeks from 99 to 73.

So we are not talking today about some complicated new system; we are simply extending the existing system. We are not changing the tiers. We are not changing any of the calculations they have to make. Indeed, that is one of the reasons why I have been arguing consistently for a straight extension—not altering the number of weeks you qualify for tier 1 or tier 2 or tier 3, but simply taking the system that was in place on December 28, and fund it retroactively to benefit those who have lost their benefits unexpectedly, and then prospectively as far forward as we could go.

Let me also point out that I was making this request before December 28. I would have hoped we could have moved in December or at least early in January to go ahead and extend this program so there would be absolutely no disruption whatsoever to the States or for the recipients. But it has been a difficult and long process to get here. Frankly, without the collaboration and efforts of many of my colleagues, and particularly, as I have indicated, my Republican colleagues—Senators HELLER, COLLINS, PORTMAN, MURKOWSKI, and KIRK—and my Democratic colleagues, including Senator BOOKER, who is here, we would not be at this point. So I am glad we are here. But we would not have any of these implementation problems had we acted in December.

Second, there was a concern that one provision relating to Federal funding for the administration of the program could be read in an overly broad fashion so that the State agencies would be so confused and it would be so complicated they could not function. So out of an abundance of caution, we have worked to address this. We have revised the legislation we had proposed to clarify the particular provision so it could not be misconstrued.

In so doing, we make it crystal clear that the prohibition on the use of Federal funding is limited solely to eligibility determinations relating to ensuring millionaires do not receive emergency unemployment insurance benefits.

Third—and this is a related issue to the whole millionaire issue—there was some concern it would be difficult to administer this prohibition. Well, in our legislation, we have a pretty straightforward requirement that individuals certify their income in the preceding year was not more than $1 million. This is a simple certification that I think could be accomplished rather efficiently and quickly by the agencies. And the Secretary of Labor has committed to issuing guidance to help States with implementation, as the Department does when any new statutory provision is enacted.

As I said before, the Secretary has assured all of the States that he is going to work to expeditiously and efficiently give them the tools to implement this program as soon as the Congress passes it and the President signs it.

Finally, there was a concern about the retroactivity. That challenge, as I said before, is why I and others pressed so hard to get this done prior to December 28 of last year. But even so, States were able to successfully work with the Department of Labor during previous lapses to provide this aid to unemployed workers. We have had these situations before where there has been a disruption of benefits, and then we have renewed the program several weeks later. And the Department of Labor is confident these challenges can be overcome.

Frankly, all of these administrative challenges for the States seem to me to pale in comparison to the challenges

being faced by our constituents, who are in a job market where in some places there are three applicants for every job, in a job market where, if you have worked for 25 years, you are about 50 years old and you are competing with 25- and 30-year-olds who have gotten recent education. Maybe they have more high-tech skills and computer skills than you have in a market that is rapidly becoming more technologically oriented in terms of labor demand.

They are facing severe challenges. These resources are not lavish. The idea that someone would not work because they are getting $300 a week is difficult, I think, to imagine for many people, particularly the people who have records of work for 10, 20, and 30 years. And what they are doing with this money is putting it right back in our economy. Many are trying to hold on to their homes, and we have heard stories about that. They are trying to put gas in the car. People have contacted me indicating that they use it to keep their phones working because without a phone they cannot get the callback for the job interview to go and find a job.

So this is something that I think has to be considered and, in my book, weighs much more heavily than administrative issues, which the Secretary of Labor assures us will be dealt with, can be dealt with, and he will work with the States to make sure it is done effectively.

Let me conclude by thanking our Republican colleagues who have joined with us. They have been extraordinarily thoughtful and collaborative. They have really contributed in an atmosphere of exchanging ideas of thoughtful consideration. It is a model, I think, of how this Senate should work more frequently, and I thank them and commend them. They have done a great service for their constituents and for the economy and the country. Indeed, ultimately, many Americans will benefit through their great contribution.

So I will hope, as we come up to these procedural votes, that we can move forward, and then we could move this expeditiously. Then we would hope the House would respond appropriately, and we can give some hope and give some confidence to people who are struggling to find jobs in this very difficult time.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOOKER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the pending legislation before the body. I urge the vote of all of my colleagues. This legislation is a bipartisan effort led by Senators MENENDEZ and CORKER, the chairman and ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee. It is very important.

Today the people of Ukraine will be watching the Senate and later the House as to whether we are going to give them initially the support they need after their country has been dismembered by Vladimir Putin in a blatant act of aggression that cannot go unresponded to.

A long time ago, 15 March 1938, Adolph Hitler made a speech to the Viennese people from a balcony of the Hofburg Palace, in the background of the heroic statue of Archduke Karl. The crowd in the square Heldenplatz numbered several hundred thousand. Hitler's words on that day about the obligation he had to take care of the German-speaking people and the German population in Austria is eerily reminiscent when we look at the speech Vladimir Putin made as he announced the absorption of Crimea into Russia.

I am not predicting we will have a World War III. I am predicting that unless we act and act vigorously—and a lot more than this legislation today—Vladimir Putin will be dramatically encouraged to take further aggressive actions, whether it be in Eastern Ukraine, whether it be Moldova, whether it be the Baltic countries, where he has already put significant pressures. Or will we send a message to Vladimir Putin that the cost of further aggression will not be matched with the benefit?

Have no doubt about the ambitions of Vladimir Putin; that is, to restore the Russian Empire. All of the illusions we had about him should have finally been dispelled. He must be treated for what he is, a KGB colonel who repeatedly stated the worst thing that happened in the 20th century was the dismemberment of the then-Soviet Union.

What Vladimir Putin understands is strength. In the words of Ronald Reagan, we can achieve ''peace through strength.'' This legislation is a good start. It is important we get it done as quickly as possible, but we have to understand he will never be our partner. He will always insist on being our adversary, and he will continue, if unchecked, to continue that vision of his expansion of the old Russian Empire.

I predicted that Vladimir Putin would go into Ukraine because he could not give up the Sevastopol naval base and access to the Mediterranean. I do not know exactly what Vladimir Putin will do in Eastern Ukraine as we speak, but there has been a buildup of Russian forces on the border of Ukraine and Russia.

This should disturb all of us. All of us should be disturbed. All of us should recognize that the kind of signal he gets in response to his latest aggression will, in many ways, dictate his future behavior in the coming days and weeks. There are many steps we need to take. We have to support Ukraine. We have to give them the economic assistance they need. We have to ensure that the March elections in Ukraine occur on time, freely, and fairly.

We have to meet Ukraine's request for immediate military assistance. Military assistance is their first priority. What did this administration do in response to their plea for the ability to defend themselves? Send them MREs. That is the same thing we did in Syria. We now have an MRE doctrine; that when a country is under threat, such as Ukraine and other countries are, we send them MREs.

We need to send them defensive weapons, which we should have done with Georgia back in the Bush administration when Vladimir Putin annexed South Ossetia and Abkhazia. His troops are there today.

We have to give them the military assistance, short term, and a long-term military assistance program of training and equipping which, by the way, we do with about 50 other countries in the world. It is not a breakthrough.

When my friends and colleagues in the administration say it would be provocative, what does it take to be further—the next time we provoke Vladimir Putin, is it going to be Alaska? We have to support countries such as Moldova and Georgia. Moldova is not a member of NATO. Transnistria is occupied by 1,500 Russian troops as we speak.

We can see the same scenario taking place in Moldova as we have seen take place in Crimea. The Baltic countries are under pressure, and continuing and increasing pressure from Russia, particularly where the ''Russian-speaking'' population is, especially in Latvia and Estonia. We have to expand sanctions under the Magnitsky Act, increase sanctions against Putin's sources of power, especially for corruption, target corrupt people, push for an arms embargo against Russia, prevent defense technology transfers, use the upcoming NATO summit to enlarge the alliance, move the process for Georgia into a membership action plan, expand NATO cooperation with Ukraine, conduct significant contingency plans within NATO to deter aggression, defend alliance members, especially along the eastern flank, strategically shift NATO military assets eastward to support deterrence. All of these things and more need to be done.

I wish to emphasize that does not mean American boots on the ground. I repeat. It does not mean American boots on the ground. So the response by some of my colleagues and those in the commentary community is that the American people do not want us to do it. Sixty-three percent of the American people say leave it alone. Sixty-one percent say do not get involved in any way.

I understand that. There have been previous times in history where the American people did not want to be involved. Yet leaders stepped forward.

Leaders explained to the American people why the United States has to be involved. I notice that the President's approval rating on the handling of foreign policy is sinking. I also understand the contradiction that over 60 percent of the American people do not want the United States engaged. That is because the American people have not been told what is at stake.

Neville Chamberlain, in 1938, when talking about Czechoslovakia, said: We are not going to send our young men to a country that they do not speak our language and we do not know. Again, I am not predicting World War III, but I am predicting that Vladimir Putin will go as far as he thinks he can in order to realize his ambition, which he has stated on numerous occasions, to restore the Russian Empire.

What does Vladimir Putin understand? Strong alliances, reprisals, consequences for misbehavior. That is what he would understand. This legislation before us, which I hope is passed 100 to 0, will indicate the first steps we are taking in response. I wish the President of the United States had not stated so clearly that we have now acquiesced to the absorption of Crimea into Ukraine.

My message to the people of Ukraine is that in the Cold War it took a long time. But we will never give up. We will never give up in our efforts to see that their country is fully restored, as guaranteed by a solemn agreement when Ukraine gave up their nuclear weapons inventory. At the time they were the world's third largest nuclear power.

In return for giving that up, their security and territory integrity, including Crimea, was maintained. There are other countries that may have nuclear weapons. What lesson do they take from this? Would Vladimir Putin have invaded Crimea if Ukraine still had nuclear weapons? That is an interesting question. So the point is that we have seen a blatant act of aggression.

Sometimes I am astounded at the media reporting. An overwhelming majority, 96 percent, voted for Crimea to be part of Russia. My friends, 12 percent of the population of Ukraine are Tatars who were deported by Joseph Stalin; half of them killed, and they were allowed to come back. I can guarantee you there is no one in that 12 percent of the population who would ever vote to be part of Russia. It was a phony election. There were no observers. I know of a poll taken a few months ago that showed 53 percent of the people in Crimea wanted to be part of the Ukraine. But the point is, here today, I hope we are beginning a path to, one, recognizing Vladimir Putin for what he is and what his ambitions are; two, dedicating ourselves to supporting these countries, these fledgling democracies—it has not been that long since the end of the Cold War—to help them on the path as they move forward to democracy, particularly Ukraine, so we can help them rid that country of corruption, rid it of its dependency, long term, on energy supplies from Russia.

We can, over a relatively short period of time, months if not years—but probably months—arrange it so we can supply Ukraine and other European countries with energy to have them become independent of Russia.

Finally, I have no illusions about what the Europeans are going to do. Very little, if anything. I have very little confidence in what this administration is going to do. So it is up to the Congress. It is up to us to act and to act decisively and send a clear message. By passing this bill today, hopefully with the House getting it done as quickly as possible, we send a message to the people of Ukraine: We stand with you. We will help you. We will do everything we can to see, over time, the restoration of your nation, as we have in times of old. We stand with you and we stand for freedom.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, today the Senate will finally adopt, after some unfortunate delays, urgent bipartisan aid and sanctions legislation on Ukraine developed with the cooperation of a number of committees here in the Senate, and constructed by Foreign Relations Committee Chairman MENENDEZ and his ranking member, Senator CORKER. Both are also distinguished senior members of the Banking Committee, which I chair, and which has jurisdiction over the economic sanctions provided for in the bill. I am pleased to have been able to work closely with them to ensure this sound result, including provisions to impose targeted asset freeze sanctions against individuals and businesses found by the President to have been responsible for threats to the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and for certain acts of corruption in Russia.

Once we pass this bill, I hope the House will act quickly to approve it and send it to the President for his signature. With this legislation, Congress is providing the President with flexible new tools to make clear to President Putin and his allies that Russia's recent moves against Ukraine are unacceptable, and that there will be an increasingly painful economic and political price to pay for these actions.

Economic sanctions are an important tool of American diplomacy. In Iran, years of tough, comprehensive economic sanctions have helped finally to bring Iran's leaders to the nuclear negotiating table. Sanctions have been wielded effectively against Sudan, North Korea, Yemen, former military and security officials in Burma, warlords in the Congo, and elsewhere. If developed in close consultation with administration officials at Treasury and the State Department who are responsible for implementing them, appropriately targeted, and applied multilaterally, sanctions can be a potent tool in the President's foreign policy arsenal. In the case of Ukraine, they will serve both to punish former Ukrainian officials and others responsible for the violence there, and to punish Russian officials for irresponsible behavior. If wielded effectively, as part of a larger diplomatic and political strategy, they can also help to deter future aggressive actions by Russia against Ukraine.

That is why I support this legislation to provide critical economic and security assistance to Ukraine, and to provide new sanctions authority to the President. I support it even though I am deeply disappointed that opposition from some of my Republican colleagues here and in the House forced the removal of important International Monetary Fund, IMF, reforms that had been included in earlier versions of the bill. Those reforms would have enabled the IMF to better implement the economic aid and reform package it has developed with the new Ukrainian Government's leadership in recent weeks, which it announced yesterday. We must get those reforms enacted as soon as possible, by other means.

This measure, along with the steps already taken by the President, the multilateral aid and sanctions measures adopted by our allies, and the economic stabilization package offered by the IMF should help to reduce tensions as this situation moves forward. I look forward to working with my colleagues not only to ensure Ukraine's stability but also the security of all our allies in Europe and beyond.

Again, I thank my colleagues Chairman MENENDEZ and Ranking Member CORKER for working so hard to perfect this legislation and move it quickly.

I urge my colleagues to support it and deliver on the promises this body and this country have made to support the people of Ukraine.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea is an affront to decent standards of international conduct. It is a violation of international law and of Russia's explicit commitment under the 1994 Bucharest Memorandum to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity. It has undermined the international order that has been put in place over the last 60 years to promote peace and stability.

President Putin and his advisers in Russia have resorted to these illegitimate actions in order to seize 10,000 square miles of Ukrainian territory. Perhaps the Kremlin believes its robbery has paid off. If so, Putin and his advisers have miscalculated. And we will aid in the task of making clear the costs of Russia's actions today with passage of this legislation.

This bill sends a message to the people of Ukraine and all those in Europe concerned about Russia's aggressive provocations. We provide important loan guarantees that will help stabilize a Ukrainian economy that was struggling even before Russia's aggression. We authorize funding to help the Ukrainian government provide the fundamental necessities of democratic

governance, including free and fair elections, strong civic institutions and protections against corruption. It will aid the Ukrainian government in recovering assets stolen by its disgraced former prime minister and other kleptocratic public officials. It will support Ukraine's efforts to free itself from captivity to Russian energy supplies. And it provides for increased security cooperation with Ukraine and with other nations in Central and Eastern Europe, including military assistance, training, and advice.

Passage of this bill would also send a strong message to Russia. It mandates sanctions and asset freezes that target Russian and Ukrainian individuals responsible for the human rights abuses against peaceful protesters in Kiev under the previous Ukrainian government. It also targets those Russians or Ukrainians whose actions have undermined Ukraine's territorial integrity.

By demonstrating our support for Ukraine and the other democratic nations of Central and Eastern Europe, and by taking action against the individuals who have participated in Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Congress can provide a key element in the broad, sustained, and energetic diplomatic approach this situation requires. The United States must act together with our European allies and other nations around the world who have an interest in maintaining respect for established borders and international law. Key to exacting a high price for Russia's actions is isolating Russia in the international community.

While this legislation is important to accomplishing our goals, it must be part of a sustained and, if necessary, intensifying effort in Congress, by the administration, and internationally. President Obama has wisely refrained from responding to Russian provocation with actions that would further destabilize matters or work against Ukraine's interests or our own. One important step in de-escalating the tension in Ukraine is the dispatch of international observers to eastern Ukraine to monitor the ground truth and hopefully discourage further provocations. But, along with NATO, we have made clear that Russia's actions will not go without response. President Obama has stated that Russia will face an escalating diplomatic and economic response if it does not reverse its course. Russia should be under no illusion that the U.S. response to its actions ends today with the passage of this legislation. We must remain prepared to take additional steps to ratchet up the pressure on Russia and to help stabilize Eastern Europe.

Russia also should have no doubt that the United States and our NATO allies take seriously our responsibilities under article 5 of the NATO treaty. Under article 5, an armed attack against any NATO ally is considered an attack against all members, and will draw any actions deemed necessary to assist the ally under attack, which may include the use of military force. Actions such as redeployment of military assets, adding aircraft to the NATO Baltic Air Policing Mission and surveillance flights over Poland and Romania are evidence that we take those article 5 responsibilities seriously. And, as our NATO commander in Europe, General Breedlove, has said, if Russia continues such provocative actions, ''we need to think about our allies, the positioning of our forces in the alliance and the readiness of those forces in the alliance, such that we can be there to defend against it.''

And as this legislation makes clear, we will continue to enhance our security cooperation with Ukraine and other Eastern European nations. One important step will be for our uniformed military professionals to expand their relationships with counterparts in Ukraine and other Eastern European nations to help build the kind of capable, professional forces that can improve their security.

Some may wonder what these events in a distant land involving old territorial disputes have to do with us as a nation. But Russia's blatant flouting of its commitments, of the territorial integrity of its European neighbors, and its trampling on the international order is damaging to our security and to the values that define us.

By passing this legislation, supporting U.S. and international actions to impose consequences on Russia and reassure the nations of Eastern Europe, and standing ready to take additional actions if required, we protect our interests and the interests of those who value peace and stability.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CORKER. I rise today to speak about the bill we are going to vote on at 12:15 p.m. relative to Ukraine.

First, I wish to say it speaks to the best of the Senate, where by working together we are going to end with a bill that sends a very strong signal to Russia but also to Ukraine in support and to the world. I believe it will be done in an overwhelming fashion in the Senate today and hopefully later today or tomorrow in the House. It is exactly what we should be doing at this time.

First, I thank Senator MENENDEZ for the way he marshaled this through the committee. I was pleased to work with him as ranking member.

I know our original piece of legislation had in it the IMF reforms that I strongly support. It was evident that the IMF reforms were not going to make it through the House and actually become law.

We all felt it was incredibly important that all of us speak in a united voice to push back on Russia's illegal actions in Crimea and potentially in Ukraine but also to do what we really need to do to support our friends in Ukraine and in the region. This bill does that. It passed out of committee with strong bipartisan support. My sense is today it will pass out of the Senate with incredibly strong bipartisan support. It will become law soon and will tremendously reinforce the way our Nation feels about what Russia is doing in such an illegal fashion—that was outmoded centuries ago—and support the people of Ukraine.

All of us know this bill provides economic support for Ukraine. We all know they are entering into an agreement with the IMF. The IMF is going to be providing some loans to help move them through the problems they have had. They have tremendous corruption in their country. They use far too much energy. They have massive deficits. Through working with the IMF and signing on to agreements, ultimately they will be forced as a nation to move ahead and to orient themselves toward stronger countries or toward the West and operate in a more democratically free manner and certainly in a way that would allow them to economically sustain themselves over time.

In this bill we also provide additional loan guarantee support, which they will need. They are facing extreme difficulties. I believe people know that recently they have agreed to charge their citizens twice as much for natural gas usage there to try to get their budgets back in balance. But it is very important that we send this signal and this strength of economic health through this $1 billion loan guarantee, which is a part of this bill today.

Another important part is sending a strong signal to Putin and to Russia. If they feel they have no price to pay for the activities they have already undertaken, they will continue to do more.

What this bill allows us to do is show strong support for what the administration has already done but, in addition to that, to make these sanctions mandatory and actually add additional elements should Russia continue to do the things they are doing in such a terrible way.

I do want to say relative to the sanctions—I appreciate the Executive order the President signed the other day that gave them the ability to put sectoral sanctions in place. The energy sector, the banking sector, and other sectors of the economy can now be targeted with sanctions.

I understand the balance that has to be put in place with sanctions where if we throw in everything but the kitchen sink on the front end, then Russia really has nothing to lose by going on into Ukraine. So we want to calibrate those in a way that deters their behavior but also gives them the ability to de-escalate.

I will say that I do think the President's comments over the past several days in Europe have seemed cautious, have seemed timid. What I hope the administration will do very soon is turn up the volume dramatically and actually send some strong sanctions into some of these sectors—into the energy and banking sectors. We don't have to do all of the companies in those areas, but if we were to do that especially with three or four additional banks in Russia, it would send a strong signal to their economy, continue to weaken their economy and to show Putin there is a heavy price to pay for the activities he is engaged in and may engage in further relative to Ukraine itself.

I encourage the administration to step ahead stronger. The European Union follows our lead, let's face it. If we act in a timid, cautious way, they are going to do the same. I think everybody in this body knows we do about $40 billion worth of trade annually with Russia, but the European Union community does $450 billion worth of trade. Generally, we are trying to work in unison, but if we as a nation act in a timid way, it encourages them as multiple countries to do the same.

Again, I do hope we will turn up the volume, and I do hope we will go ahead and sanction some additional entities in Russia. There are many state-owned enterprises there. We all know that. That is one problem with the Russian economy right now. I think we all know they are really an autocratic petrostate. We know that they are not doing well, that their budget is based on the fact that oil sells at $110 per barrel, and that really that is mostly their economy.

Again, what we need to do as a nation—we are supporting the administration in this bill. We are supporting Ukraine with this bill. We are also authorizing some assistance to some of our allies in the region. We are also authorizing some democracy assistance. The bill has no fiscal areas that are not paid for. This is a great piece of legislation.

I do hope that over time Senator REID will allow us to revisit the issue because, let's face it, we created this piece of legislation about 2 weeks ago. The events in Ukraine continue to unfold. So I hope we will come back again as changes occur. I know there are many people in this body who are actually trying to put additional pieces of legislation into place not only to sanction Russia even more fully, not only to assist Ukraine in other than economic ways, but also to use some of the strategic assets we have as a nation not only to benefit our economy but also to help our allies in the region so that they are not really subject to the economic extortion we have seen Russia try to carry out with our friends and also try to carry out with Ukraine, which this bill is all about.

I close by thanking Senator MENENDEZ.

I thank Senator REID for filing cloture on a bill that came out of the committee immediately so we would be in a place today to deal with this.

I thank Senator MCCONNELL, who was able to work with Senator REID and the House to deal with this legislatively in a very creative way, using a vehicle that came from the House and sending something back to the House so that this can become law very quickly.

I thank the House for cooperating with us on this bill because to have a piece of legislation go out of the Senate today and likely become law very soon is something that takes a lot of coordination. I thank the leadership in the House for helping us make this happen.

I again thank the administration for their focus on this issue. I hope this bill will show strong support for some of the efforts that have already taken place, and I do hope the administration will not undercalculate. I think that right now Putin doesn't yet know what he is going to do relative to South and Eastern Ukraine. I don't think he knows, and I think he is watching us and he is calibrating what his steps are going to be based on the pain his own country will receive if they take the wrong steps. It is very important that the President send additional sanctions into Russia, send additional signals, and that we send shock waves into their economy now—not everything we have to throw at them but some of it—so they know that if they take additional steps, real pain is on the way.

This bill supports those efforts of the administration, it supports Ukraine, it pushes back on Russia, and it shows support for allies in the region. It is a great piece of legislation. It is the first step. More should come.

I am pleased we are at this point today. I thank all those involved, and I look forward to a very strong vote in the Senate at 12:15 p.m.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. 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. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor as we are at a moment of truth and a moment of incredible importance, and I wish to start off by acknowledging the distinguished Republican ranking member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CORKER, for the spirit in which we have worked together to marshal forces to bring critical legislation to the floor at a critical time in history. This is the type of relationship we have had for the last 15 months, during which time we have often seen such partisanship, where on every major piece of legislation that has passed out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, it has passed on a strong bipartisan vote, and I appreciate his leadership and his working with us.

Let me reiterate what I have said on the Senate floor. President Putin is watching. He is waiting to see what we will do, waiting to see if we have the resolve to act, waiting to see if he has a green light to take the next step. I believe we need to act now and pass this legislation, and I welcome the flexibility the House has shown in its resolve to move this quickly upon receipt.

Although I believe our response to Russia's annexation of Crimea should have included IMF reforms to strengthen the U.S. role in the international community, that will not be the case, but we still need to act on this issue today. So I hope, in short order, we can have the IMF reform legislation on the floor and take a responsible vote on an important issue.

But let us be clear where we are at this moment. Let us be clear about what happened in Ukraine over the last several years and what is happening now as Ukraine simply looks westward. Former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych was elected on a platform that advocated closer ties to Europe. In fact, his first trip abroad was not to Moscow but to Brussels to meet with European Union officials. For 3 years Ukraine officials voted in good faith with their European counterparts. They believed they did so with their President's support. Ukrainian public opinion polls favored the conclusion of an agreement between the EU and the Ukraine that would increase trade and cooperation, allowing more people, goods, services, and ideas to cross the border from the West.

On November 21, Yanukovych flipped 180 degrees. He announced an end to talks with the European Union, and Ukrainians felt bitterly betrayed. For 20 years, Ukraine has struggled to economically develop. They have struggled to establish representative government. They have struggled to achieve a stable way forward, a path of economic security and political democracy. The association agreement with the European Union had promised a path toward those goals. So people were furious, and they took to the streets. They knew from personal experience what the world now knows—that Yanukovych and his government and his family had stolen tens of billions of dollars from Ukrainian taxpayers, jeopardizing the solvency and independence of their country to support a lavish lifestyle while the public went without.

The people who took to the Maidan Square in the freezing cold were simply looking westward. They believed the European Union was their last best hope to break the cycle of corruption. They knew their future was being stolen. So they marched and they took beatings from Yanukovych's paramilitary forces, not for a treaty but for the hope of a better, more honest and free Ukraine that it promised.

Putin resorted to outright extortion to keep Ukraine in his sphere of influence, essentially offering to buy Ukraine by offering Yanukovych $15 billion, and it would have worked but for the uprising of the Ukrainian people who realized this was a Faustian bargain and that Putin was the devil, not their savior.

Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians demonstrated for 3 months to call for the President's resignation. On February 22 of this year, President Yanukovych fled to Russia and an interim government was installed in Ukraine.

Almost immediately, Russian forces took control of the Crimean Peninsula, a clear violation of international law and Russia's own commitments under the Budapest agreement and the Helsinki Final Act. This demands a swift and coordinated and powerful response from the international community and from this Congress. It demands a message to Putin of our resolve and to the Ukrainian people of our support.

That message came, in part, on March 13, when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed, by a bipartisan vote of 14 to 3, the Support for the Sovereignty, Integrity, Democracy, and Economic Stability of Ukraine Act of 2014.

In addition to providing $1 billion in loan guarantees for Ukraine to provide crucial support to stabilize Ukraine's economy, this legislation authorizes assistance for democracy, governance, and civil society programs as well as for enhanced security cooperation. It provides support to the Ukrainian Government to help recover access linked to corruption by former President Yanukovych, his family, and other government officials.

It imposes sanctions against those who are responsible for violent human rights abuses against antigovernment protesters as well as those responsible for undermining the peace, security, stability, sovereignty or territorial integrity of the Ukraine. It imposes asset freezes and visa revocations on Russian officials and their associates who are complicit in or responsible for significant corruption in Ukraine and authorizes sanctions against any Russian official engaged in corruption in the Ukraine or in Russia. Putin's cronies should recognize that Putin may not be the right horse to be betting on any longer. Finally, it sends a powerful message to Russia that there are consequences for using force to annex sovereign territory against the established norms of the international community.

I will take one other moment to say that I have read some editorials suggesting that Ukraine is not that important to us; that it is more important to Europe than it is to us, so what could be our interest. Let me offer a few observations of what the interest of the United States is.

For some time we have been working to see Ukraine move to a democratic, stable government, looking westward, and in doing so strengthening a big part of Eastern Europe at the end of the day in a way that strengthens the security of that region and the fiscal opportunities of that region.

We look at the Ukraine and we say to ourselves, well, they are not a NATO member. But other NATO allies—some of which I met with when I was in Brussels this past week—who are NATO members are watching and asking: What will Europe and the United States do in the face of Russian aggression? What is our ultimate security going to depend on? We are a NATO member. We are, under article 5 of NATO's treaty, ultimately supposed to be protected because we are committed to the protection of all our other neighbors under NATO. Some of those countries actually meet the full responsibility they have under NATO to pay their quota for the collective defense.

So Ukraine is not a NATO member, but they are looking at what the West's resolve is in the face of this aggression and the possibility of Russian forces moving further west, asking: Is NATO going to stand up for me? That agreement is one of the fundamental institutions that has created security on the European Continent and for which America twice—twice—sent its sons and daughters abroad to ultimately guarantee that security. We need to ensure that NATO continues to be a vibrant entity for the collective security of the United States and of Europe. This is another reason we are interested.

Thirdly, I would just simply say, as I have said on the Senate floor before, the world is watching. China is watching, and they are wondering what America and the West will do as they look at territories they dispute with our allies—Japan and South Korea in the South China Sea. They say: The West let Putin get away with this. Why should we not take those territories? There will be no consequence. Or as we are negotiating with Iran across the table to stop their nuclear weapons program, the Iranians look and ask: How much will the West punish Russia for this aggression, because if there isn't much consequence, then why should I not try to get the maximum of this deal or not accept the deal at all. Or North Korea, which wants to advance even further its missile program, which already possesses nuclear capability, what is their calculation?

I could go around the globe describing at this moment, beyond the Ukraine, how the European Union and the United States acts will send a very clear message to world actors, and that message hopefully will be one of strength, because in doing so we may avert the consequences of security challenges around the globe, avert the possibility we will have to send our sons and daughters into harm's way if we act decisively, if we act with strength.

That is the opportunity we have. The world is watching, and we must rise to the challenge. Passing this legislation goes a long way toward that goal, and that is both the opportunity and the responsibility before the Senate. I urge my colleagues to speak with one voice.

I hope we get as near to unanimity as possible, as we have done at other times; for example, on the question of sanctions on Iran. This is such a moment. If the Senate speaks with one voice, I think President Putin will understand the consequences of miscalculating further. I hope that is the opportunity of which we will avail ourselves and, in doing so, send a message beyond Putin to the rest of the world that we have the resolve necessary to rise to such challenges.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. JOHANNS. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. PRYOR. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

All time is expired.

Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2867, offered by the Senator from Nevada, Mr. REID.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 2, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 88 Leg.]

YEAS—98

Alexander	Cornyn	Johnson (WI)
Ayotte	Crapo	Kaine
Baldwin	Cruz	King
Barrasso	Donnelly	Kirk
Begich	Durbin	Klobuchar
Bennet	Enzi	Landrieu
Blumenthal	Feinstein	Leahy
Blunt	Fischer	Lee
Booker	Flake	Levin
Boozman	Franken	Manchin
Boxer	Gillibrand	Markey
Brown	Graham	McCain
Burr	Grassley	McCaskill
Cantwell	Hagan	McConnell
Cardin	Harkin	Menendez
Carper	Hatch	Merkley
Casey	Heinrich	Mikulski
Chambliss	Heitkamp	Moran
Coats	Hirono	Murkowski
Coburn	Hoeven	Murphy
Cochran	Inhofe	Murray
Collins	Isakson	Nelson
Coons	Johanns	Portman
Corker	Johnson (SD)	Pryor

Reed	Scott	Udall (NM)
Reid	Sessions	Vitter
Risch	Shaheen	Walsh
Roberts	Shelby	Warner
Rockefeller	Stabenow	Warren
Rubio	Tester	Whitehouse
Sanders	Thune	Wicker
Schatz	Toomey	Wyden
Schumer	Udall (CO)	

NAYS—2

Heller	Paul

The amendment was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I am hopeful and confident the next two votes will be by voice. We expect to have the next vote around 1:45 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the engrossment of the amendment and third reading of the bill.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

The bill (H.R. 4152), as amended, was passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Maria Contreras-Sweet, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask to be recognized for 3 minutes.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I understand that this will be a voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Thank you Madam President. I want to thank my Senate colleagues and Senator RISCH for helping us get the next Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration to the floor.

First, I want to recognize everybody's thoughts and prayers here for Oso and Darrington, WA, and for the people who have been hit by an unbelievable tragedy. Our hearts go out to this community and I want to say that this has been a tremendous effort by first responders.

There are hundreds of volunteers, thousands of dollars of contributions. And Darrington High School students made 1,300 sandwiches to try to support the research and recovery effort. I thank them for all of their hard work.

One of the reasons I want to get a Small Business Administrator is because this agency is going to play a role in this recovery. I thank my colleague, Senator MURRAY, for her help and support.

The Small Business Administration plays an important role for communities in disasters and the woman we have before us is a well-qualified woman who can help us with this crisis and continued small business lending.

The SBA has been without an Administrator for 8 months, and it is critical that we get this position filled today. We cannot forget that small businesses create two out of three new jobs in our country—and the SBA provide $28 million small business assistance that helps them create more jobs.

So every single day we need to think about small businesses in our community and how much we need to help and support them. Businesses, from Chobani Yogurt to Ben & Jerry's ice cream to Federal Express, have benefited from the SBA program. To have somebody like Maria Contreras-Sweet to be this person is critical for us.

I urge my colleagues to support her in this nomination and to move forward on an SBA agenda. Everything from making sure we approve the 504 program, to the STEP export assistance program, and to make sure that we continue to make ground on exporting small business products—made in the United States of America—to the growing middle-class around the globe.

I thank my colleagues and I urge them to support this nominee.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise to express my strong support for Maria Contreras-Sweet—a woman eminently qualified to serve our country as the next administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Maria Contreras-Sweet is the right person to lead the SBA given her distinguished record of public service and her deep understanding of the challenges and needs facing small businesses today.

As the founder of ProAmérica Bank, the first Latino-owned business bank in California in over 30 years and a leading financial services provider and SBA lender, she successfully expanded access to capital for small- and medium-sized businesses that often lacked access to larger, traditional financial institutions.

Just yesterday, my colleagues in the Hispanic Task Force and I met with Latino business leaders from across the Nation, and the No. 1 issue that was raised by nearly everyone in the room was the need to assist minority entrepreneurs and small business owners with obtaining financing and access to capital—an essential function of the SBA, and one that Maria-Contreras Sweet understands first-hand.

Her commitment to supporting small businesses owners embodies the entrepreneurial spirit that makes our country great—and is exactly the kind of leadership the SBA needs.

Maria Contreras-Sweet also has a proven track record as a dedicated public servant. She previously served as secretary of the California Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency, where she was the driving force behind major job creation and public investments in infrastructure and housing.

As the first Latina to serve as a cabinet secretary in the state, she managed a budget of $14 billion and oversaw more than 40,000 employees. This is truly a remarkable nominee who brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership to the Small Business Administration, as well as a compelling personal story.

Maria Contreras-Sweet, like me, has humble beginnings. As a young child, she immigrated to the United States from Guadalajara, Mexico. She settled in California, where her mother worked long hours at a chicken packaging plant to support her and her five siblings. Her family did not speak any English when they arrived, and Maria has said that it was precisely hearing no' so many times and seeing so many doors close for them that prompted her to speak up for others, to fight to level the playing field for all, and to find a way to say yes' to people with good ideas who can drive innovation who are all too often overlooked for the wrong reasons.

Maria Contreras-Sweet represents the promise of America, the fulfillment of the American Dream, and the expansion of this dream to millions more entrepreneurs and small business owners across the Nation. She is building wealth for American families and communities, and building pathways to growth and prosperity that extend far beyond the business sector.

Maria Contreras-Sweet is the right nominee for the job. I applaud President Obama for selecting her to be our nation's next SBA administrator, and I thank Leader REID for moving quickly to confirm her nomination without delay. I'm very pleased the time has finally come for good people like Maria Contreras-Sweet to get the up-or-down vote they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to vote to confirm this qualified, competent nominee without hesitation.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I am pleased to support the nomination of Maria Contreras-Sweet to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration. The SBA Administrator plays an important role in helping small businesses create jobs, mainly by making sure small businesses have access to capital. Ms. Contreras-Sweet is remarkably qualified for this position,

having founded and run a bank that focuses on making small and mid-size loans. She also served as the head of California's Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. The SBA will benefit from the valuable insight Ms. Contreras-Sweet gained from this combination of experience working directly with small businesses and administering a large government agency. The experience will serve her well as SBA Administrator.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship I had the opportunity to engage Ms. Contreras-Sweet during her confirmation hearing. She impressed me with her understanding of all that it takes to launch and run a successful small business. She has the skills and the enthusiasm to help entrepreneurs drive our economic growth and create jobs.

I am happy to support Ms. Contreras-Sweet's nomination and I look forward to working with her as the SBA Administrator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Maria Contreras-Sweet, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 1:45 p.m. today the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Owens nomination—Calendar No. 573; that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination; that immediately following the cloture vote and notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate resume legislative session and proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on H.R. 3979; further, if cloture is invoked on the Owens nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired at 5:30 p.m., Monday, March 31, and the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of the Owens nomination; that upon disposition of the Owens nomination, the Senate resume legislative session and, if cloture is invoked on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3979, then all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate proceed to consideration of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that following the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3979, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 700; that there be 2 minutes for debate, equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on the nomination; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that President Obama be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

SGR

Mr. REID. Madam President, for the knowledge of all Members, 20 minutes ago or so the House passed by voice vote the—

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, the Senate is not in order. No one can hear.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is correct. The Senate is not in order. The Senate will be in order. Senators will bring their conversations to a close.

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Twenty minutes ago the House passed by voice vote the 13-month patch of the SGR.

There was work done on a bipartisan basis by all Senators to get a permanent fix. We can only do what we can do. I have had a number of my Republican colleagues come to me and say: We will do this, but you have to get the assurance of the Speaker that he would accept this, and the Speaker would not accept what was being proposed. The original plan was my idea and I am very disappointed it didn't work out, but I have been trying to do it for 4 years, so I am not surprised. But it is no one's fault in the Senate.

We have a new chair of the Finance Committee. He has worked very hard on a bipartisan basis to come up with a way to get rid of this SGR once and for all. We weren't able to do that.

So the patch we have is imperfect, but it is something that will take care of things. I don't mean to be mean-spirited, but I am tired of people saying you are taking care of the doctors but no one else. We are taking care of patients for the next 13 months—patients—and I think that is extremely important. We have millions of people who have doctors who take Medicare patients. For us not to do this would have been truly unfortunate.

I am disappointed we aren't able to get a permanent fix, but we have been able to do that. We should be very happy we have been able to do as well as we have done. I personally am not overjoyed about what is in the bill, but I am satisfied with what is in the bill. I hope we can expeditiously move and get this done today.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VENEZUELA

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, the reason I come to the floor is to call attention to a crisis that has fallen off the front pages over the last few weeks; that is, the situation in our own hemisphere that is occurring in Venezuela. I recognize there have been news stories about an airplane that has been tragically potentially lost—or has been lost. We don't know the full outcome of that yet. I know the situation in Ukraine has captivated the attention of the public—and rightfully so—and I am pleased to see the Senate has taken important steps today toward addressing that issue.

I wish to speak about something that is happening in our own backyard, in our own hemisphere; in fact, something that is impacting hundreds of thousands of people who live in Florida because they have family members who still live in the country of Venezuela.

Since February 4 of this year, Venezuelans have been taking to the streets to complain about their government. These Venezuelans are from all walks of life, but they have truly been motivated by young people, by students.

The origins of this public discontent are important to understand because they are not just purely political. It in fact has to do with the dysfunction and the failures of the government that is currently in charge of that country. The statistics bear out that dysfunction and their failures. For example, violence and insecurity is among the highest in the entire Western Hemisphere. The murder rate in Venezuela was 79 per 100,000 people in 2013.

In the city of Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, the murder rate is actually almost double that. It is 122 per 100,000, making it one of the most dangerous cities on Earth. The unbridled corruption that exists in terms of how State assets are used—Venezuela is an oil-rich country. There are individuals in that government who have empowered themselves of Venezuela's oil, not their oil, and are basically giving it away to countries such as Cuba and others and using it as their own personal piggy bank for personal enrichment and to fund their governmental operations at the expense of the people of Venezuela.

Their inflation rate is 57 percent. In fact, this week Fitch ratings lowered Venezuela's sovereign debt rating into junk territory from B-plus to B. They warned, by the way, that further downgrades are on the way.

There is also this unprecedented scarcity of basic goods, including food staples; even things such as toilet paper there is a shortage of. I will show some graphics. This is a line of people waiting in the city of San Cristobal to go into a supermarket. We are talking about a rich country. This is not a Third World country. This is not a nation that is poor. This is a revenue-rich nation, among the most resource rich on the planet. Here is a line of people waiting to go into a grocery store, reminiscent of Cuba, for example, a country whose model this government follows, and we will talk about that more in a moment.

Let me show my colleagues a picture of some store shelves inside a Venezuelan supermarket: completely empty, nothing on the shelves. This is the economic reality of the failure of the Maduro-Chavez government in Venezuela today, and this is why, among other reasons, people have taken to the streets to demonstrate.

There was another catalyst: a sexual assault that occurred on a college campus, and students were protesting against law enforcement's unwillingness to address that assault. The government cracked down—but not on the sexual assaulters, not on the perpetrators, on the demonstrators.

All of these things we have talked about—the failure of that State, the lack of democratic opening, the political abuses, the corruption, and the economic disaster of the Venezuelan Government—led to demonstrations that began on February 4 and continue throughout the country.

I want to show you a picture of what those demonstrations looked like. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to protest, and they were protesting the things I have outlined already: the insecurity, the violence, the scarcity of basic goods, the lack of opportunity, the political repression.

Meanwhile, Nicolas Maduro, the President of that country, and all of his cronies live a life of luxury—and we are going to talk about that more in a moment—because this government is surrounded by individuals who are living lives of luxury not just in Venezuela but in Florida.

While the people take to the streets—and you saw the empty store shelves—there are people tied to the Government in Venezuela buying gold-plated iPads—I did not even know there was such a thing—in Miami and investing in enormous properties and mansions, with the money they are stealing, with the help of the Maduro government, from the people of Venezuela, leading to these protests.

So what has been the response of the Maduro government? What has been the response to these legitimate complaints about what is happening in Venezuela?

I am going to show you some images of what the response has been from the government.

Here is the first. Here is their national guard. Here is their national guard battling with students in the streets, fully equipped with riot gear, ready to battle against them. This has been their response: repression at every turn in multiple cities.

Here is the other response: teargas—teargas by a fully armored individual, firing teargas canisters into the crowd.

Let me talk about the teargas for a moment. Let me show you this canister. This canister that was used against peaceful protesters actually has a marking. It says: ''HECHO EN BRASIL''—''MADE IN BRAZIL.'' And there have been reports, in fact, that there has been some U.S.-manufactured teargas being used against protesters in the streets in Venezuela.

But if it stopped at teargas, it would be one thing. But it has not stopped at teargas. In fact, it is now known that the Interior Ministry of Venezuela authorized snipers to travel to Tachira State and fire on demonstrators.

Here is a picture of a government official, of a law enforcement or army or national guard individual, or an Interior Ministry individual on a rooftop with a rifle and a scope aiming into a crowd.

Here is a picture of a sniper. It does not end there. Those are not the only pictures we have.

Here are more pictures of more snipers on rooftops.

Here is another sniper aiming into the crowd, with a spotter next to him.

Here is another blown-up picture of the same sniper.

These are government-sponsored individuals. What civilized planet on Earth sends the national guard and the interior ministry of their own government, of their own country, with snipers to fire on their own people who are demonstrating because of the lack of freedoms and opportunity and economic degradation that exists in a country?

They cannot deny this. Here are pictures, taken by demonstrators themselves, of the snipers ready to shoot down people. In fact, 36 people have lost their lives.

But it does not end just with the government snipers. Because what the government is trying to do here to hide their involvement is they have organized these progovernment militia groups, basically—these militant groups that they hide behind. These groups do not wear uniforms. They are called ''colectivos.'' They drive around the city on motorcycles, and they assault protesters. They break in and vandalize their homes. They have weapons that they use to shoot into the crowds and kill or harm people.

There are three main groups. By the way, these groups began under Hugo Chavez's reign, and these groups are actually organized around a concept that has existed for years in Cuba—these committees to defend the revolution. These are neighborhood groups, so they know your family, they know who you are, they are always watching, and they organize themselves into armed militias. The government's claim is: Well, these groups are on their own. We are not coordinating with them. But, in fact, there have been multiple reports that these groups coordinate with the national guard to take down barricades set up by protesters, to break into the homes of protesters, to vandalize homes, to terrorize people, and to kill.

There are three main groups that I want to point out, these colectivos.

La Piedrita is one of them. It is based in a working-class neighborhood of Caracas. It has a far-left ideology. It is armed. It is comprised of radicals who claim to be willing to die for their revolutionary ideals—whatever those are.

In January, this group, by the way, tweeted that Henrique Capriles—the opposition party's nominee for President in the last elections—is a racist and a fascist and accused him of intending to launch attacks on the poor and on impoverished neighborhoods.

Another colectivo: the Patriotic Force of National Liberation. This group bases its beliefs on the teachings of a leftist revolutionary and murderer by the name of Che Guevara.

A third group is the Tupamaro Revolutionary Movement. This is an armed communist political and militant organization that also operates out of Caracas.

These are just three of these armed, un-uniformed, thuggish, criminal groups that operate under the auspices and at the direction of the government of Nicolas Maduro and the people who surround him.

So what is the result?

The result is there have been over 1,800 people detained in Venezuela since this began last month. Over 450 people have been injured. Over 50 people have been tortured while detained—that we have reports on. And over 36 people have been killed.

This is not happening on a continent halfway around the world. This is happening in our hemisphere, right now, in real time. And these numbers, they just summarize the depth and the scope and the breadth of what is happening in the regime's brutality in Venezuela.

But these are not just statistics. Behind every single one of these—behind the 36 who have been killed, behind the 1,800 who have been detained, behind the 450 who have been injured—are real people, with names and families and fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters and children. I want to tell you the story of a couple of them.

The first is Marvinia Jimenez. Here in this picture you see her on her knees as part of a peaceful protest. And here you see an armed individual with a pistol pointed at her. She is on her knees

and poses no threat. She has given herself up as a peaceful protester, as she confronts an armed individual associated with the government holding a pistol.

What happened next in these pictures is these armed individuals from the Interior Ministry grabbed her by the wrist and head. They subsequently throw her to the ground. And here is what they do when she is on the ground. This individual here—a female, a member of the Interior Ministry—takes off her helmet and proceeds to beat her in the head with that helmet.

Here is the picture. This is real. This is not a movie. This is happening. This is happening now.

This happened to Marvinia Jimenez, and luckily someone caught it on their phone and was able to capture these images.

These are uniformed individuals associated with the government. You saw she had given herself up and was on her knees. And this is what happens: She gets beaten in the face with a helmet.

She lived to tell her story. But there are others who have not been so fortunate.

Here is Geraldine Moreno. She was a college student in the city of Valencia.

On February 19, she stepped outside of her home to see what was going on during an antigovernment protest. Six national guard members—six national guard members of the Maduro government—came by on motorcycles to break up the protest.

As the demonstrators fled, they fired into the crowd, and she was hit by gunfire and fell to the ground. She struggled to get up, and just then one of the national guard members came up and shot her in the face at point blank range and killed her.

Geraldine was someone's daughter. In fact, she was not just anyone's daughter, she was Rosa Orozco's daughter, and Rosa has lost her daughter forever.

This is the youth of Venezuela. This is supposed to be Venezuela's future, and they are being indiscriminately mowed down in the street by the government of their own country.

There are some inspiring stories too.

As shown in this picture, this is Maria Corina Machado, a member of the Venezuelan opposition party in Parliament. She was here in Washington this week. She has bravely spoken out against these things going on in Venezuela, and bravely, the Government of Panama gave her the space to speak out on behalf of the people of Venezuela at a recent OAS meeting. But, shamefully, the rest of the countries that are members of the OAS—not the United States or Canada but every other country did nothing to defend her right to speak, and she was denied the right to tell the world the truth about what is happening.

She could have stayed in exile and asked for political asylum, but do you know what this brave young woman did? She got on an airplane and flew back to Venezuela—to her country—to continue the fight there, peacefully, as a member of their Parliament, as a member of the opposition party.

Well, when she arrived, she was immediately detained at the airport in Caracas. She was questioned by the thugs you just saw, who no doubt tried to intimidate her in that questioning. She was verbally attacked by government supporters at the airport. And then she got in her car to leave, to go to her destination, and these same thugs tried to run her car off the road. They are so incompetent that they could not even carry that out, thankfully. She finally made it to her destination.

And then guess what happens this week. The speaker of their so-called National Assembly—an individual by the name of Diosdado Cabello—a Maduro loyalist, a criminal—decided to remove her, to basically just expel her from the National Assembly. She is no longer a member of the National Assembly—unilaterally dismissed by the equivalent of their Assembly's president, their speaker.

The OAS's response to this has been shameful. The Organization of American States has been downright embarrassing and shameful. I thought it was best summarized by the opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, who wrote in the New York Times on March 25:

> The outspoken response from human rights organizations is in sharp contrast to the shameful silence from many of Venezuela's neighbors in Latin America. The Organization of American States, which represents nations in the Western Hemisphere, has abstained from any real leadership on the current crisis of human rights and the looming specter of a failed state, even though it was formed precisely to address issues like these.

Why do we even need an OAS—an organization of democratically elected governments—why do we even need it, why are we even members of it, why do we even contribute funds of American taxpayers towards it, if it cannot meet and address systemic human rights abuses such as these?

I am less than pleased, by the way, with our own government's reaction. This is not a partisan issue, but I have to say this. President Obama has expressed he is concerned about this. To his credit, the Vice President was stronger in condemning the Maduro regime.

We are not just concerned about this. We should be outraged about this. Just as we are outraged when things go wrong in other parts of the world and weigh in with sanctions—and we should—and our voices—and we should—this is happening in our own hemisphere, right underneath our nose. And it is shameful that the leadership of our government has so far not done more to address this. But we can change that, and I am hoping that we will.

What I hope to do over the next few days is to propose specific sanctions against individuals and companies associated with the Maduro regime so they know there are consequences for what is happening here. And you think our sanctions have an impact on Russia in its violations of Ukrainian sovereignty? Sanctions against Maduro and his government would have a dramatic impact. Because all those people who are around him who are getting rich off this regime, who are supporting these abuses so they can stay in power and keep making money, they all have bank accounts and property and restaurants and businesses and mansions in the United States of America. And if you support this, this government should sanction you.

I ask what I did a few weeks ago in a speech on this subject: If the United States of America will not stand up and be a strong voice on behalf of people who all they seek is freedom and liberty that our own founding documents say belong to all people—rights given to them by their Creator—if the United States of America will not be a forceful voice, what nation on Earth will? They look to us. Our own model of freedom and our Republic inspires people. We say we stand for these principles. We need to defend them when they are threatened, especially in our own backyard.

So I hope in the weeks to come we can pursue these targeted sanctions against some of these individuals associated with the government, like the Assembly president Diosdado Cabello, and others such as these individuals who we will come on the floor in the next few weeks and identify by name, those who benefit from the systematic violation of human rights in Venezuela, who are stealing money from the Venezuelan people, who are using the resources of that nation to enrich themselves. In the next few weeks, we will identify them by name and the properties they own and the assets they hold in our own Nation.

But I implore my colleagues not to ignore this issue. This is happening right now, right in our own backyard, in our own hemisphere, and it is impacting real people at an extraordinary price.

So I hope in the weeks to come that I—along with Senator MENENDEZ and others who have united behind us and with us—will be able to convince enough of my colleagues to take the next step.

We have already unanimously passed the resolution condemning all of this. I thank my colleagues in the Senate for that. The next step is to build in real consequences for being a part of this. My colleagues will have an opportunity to be a part of this in the next few days, especially when we return next week.

I hope we can get a hearing on these sanctions in the Foreign Relations Committee, and I hope we can get passage of it on the floor, so we can send a clear signal to the people of Venezuela: The people of the United States of America are on your side. We support your cause. We will not forget what you are going through. We will not abandon your aspirations. We stand for the liberty and the freedom of all people, including those who do not live here with us.

This is what we are going to have a chance to do in the next few days. I hope we can successfully take action.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I was not planning this today, but as many of my colleagues do, I do a morning coffee where anybody from my State of Ohio—as Senator DURBIN does in Illinois, Senator UDALL in New Mexico, and others—and my colleague from Ohio does one too, Senator PORTMAN—people can come in from around the State and talk about what they want.

A couple came in today, a father and a mother and two children. One looked to be maybe 10 and the other looked to be maybe 15. They came and wanted to talk to me about their private school. They have sort of a home school association, it sounded like, from a conservative part of Ohio, Southwest Ohio. We talked about what we could do to help them in terms of educating their children.

Then, right before we parted—and I was going to see other people at this coffee; we had maybe 75 people there—the mother of these two children said: By the way, thank you for the Affordable Care Act.

I said: How is that?

She pointed to her son. She said: My son—I think he was 15. She said: My son is diabetic. As I learned later, he was diagnosed at the age of 6 and has injected insulin into his arm and his leg for 8 or 9 years. She said: My son who is diabetic, we could not get insurance because of my son's preexisting condition, diabetes. We were turned down—I counted them. We were turned down 34 times for insurance. My family was turned down 34 times for insurance. Because of the Affordable Care Act we now have health insurance.

She smiled. That is one of the most poignant stories I have heard about the importance of this new law. There are 160,000 people in my State who now have insurance that did not have it in December. But this family—you think about what this is all about. This family's peace of mind, this family's ability to focus on other things now, because they have insurance that they could not get, even though he had a job—the father had a job—I am not sure where the mother worked.

But the point is, they were turned down, she said, 34 times because their son cost the insurance more money because he had a preexisting condition with diabetes. So I guess my question to my colleagues is, why do we want to repeal this? How do my colleagues, including many, many elected officials in my State who before have been resistant to the Affordable Care Act to win elections, saying: Repeal the Affordable Care Act—how do they explain that to this family—if they met this family and the mother said: We have insurance; we were turned down 34 times. Why do you want to repeal this law? Why do you want to take it away from the 160,000 Ohioans who have insurance? Why do you want to do that to the 100,000 25-, 22-, and 19-year-olds in Ohio—in my State alone, one State of the 50 where 100,000 young people have insurance and they are on their parent's plan because of the Affordable Care Act.

Some 900,000 Ohio seniors have gotten check-ups, no copay, no deductibles, free checkups, free osteoporosis screenings, and free physicals because of the Affordable Care Act.

How do you take that away from those seniors? How do you take away the $900 in savings that the average senior in my State, who is on this—President Bush's, initially—drug plan, the Medicare drug plan? How do you take away that $900 savings? You are going to repeal ObamaCare? You are going to repeal the Affordable Care Act and take those away? How do you face the people like the family I met today? Thirty-four times she was turned down for insurance. I did not make this up. That is her number. She said: I counted; 34 times they turned our family down for insurance because my child has diabetes. How do you think that makes him feel, first of all. But equally importantly, she has the comfort and safety in her mind now of having insurance.

I do not even understand. What do my colleagues do? Do they wake up every morning thinking: I want to take that insurance from 150,000 Ohio families; I do not want them to have it; I want to take those benefits from those 900,000 Ohio seniors. I want to make them pay $900 more.

That is what they are saying: Repeal ObamaCare.

We lose all of that, if they want to keep talking about taking these benefits away. Let's live with this law. Let's make it work well. It is starting to work really well in Ohio. We are having thousands of sign-ups every single day. I know in the Presiding Officer's State of Hawaii, they are getting lots of people to sign up. Lots of young people are signing up. Let's move on. Let's stop debating this. Help make it work better. Let's talk about how we create jobs, not how you are going to repeal some health care law that you did not like because it did not fit with your ideology or you did not like the President—whatever the reason my colleagues seem to not like the Affordable Care Act.

History is going to say over and over: Why do you want to take these benefits away? This is working. Remember back with Medicare in 1965. They were not the tea party. They were called the John Birch Society back then. They did not like it. Insurance companies did not like it. But everybody liked it 5 years later.

Social Security—the same forces, the same far right forces opposed it. Five years later, people liked it. This stuff works. It is going to make such a difference in people's lives. Forget about the 150,000. Forget about the numbers. Focus on that family—34 times turned down for insurance. She has insurance now. Her diabetic son can get the care he needs. That is such a wonderful thing.

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. CARDIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CARDIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

REMEMBERING PETTY OFFICER MARK MAYO

Mr. CARDIN. I rise to speak about the tragic death of a fellow Marylander, PO2 Mark Mayo. His heroic sacrifice is the truest display of the U.S. Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment. The U.S. Navy confirmed yesterday that PO2 Mark Mayo put himself in harm's way to save his shipmate. On behalf of a grateful nation and on behalf of my fellow Senators, I offer condolences to the families, friends, and shipmates of Petty Officer Mayo.

The tragic events this past Monday evening are still under investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, but what we know so far is that at approximately 11:20 p.m. there was a shooting on board the destroyer Mahan.

A civilian who was behaving erratically approached the Mahan's quarterdeck and was confronted by the ship's petty officer of the watch. The two engaged in a struggle and the civilian was able to disarm the sailor.

Petty Officer Mayo, serving as the chief of the guard, witnessed the fight and ran to the quarterdeck and placed himself between the civilian and his shipmate, the petty officer of the watch. The civilian opened fire and fatally wounded Petty Officer Mayo.

U.S. Navy CAPT Robert Clark, Norfolk Naval Station's commanding officer, said:

> Petty Officer Mayo's actions were nothing less than heroic; he selflessly gave his own life to ensure the safety of the sailors on board.

Petty Officer Mayo's parents, Sharon Blair and Decondi Mayo, said their son's actions reflected his strong, caring nature. As his mother put it: ''He protected people. He was a protector.''

Petty Officer Mayo was born in Washington, DC, and moved with his family to Hagerstown, MD, in 1998. He enlisted in the Navy in 2007, 4 months after graduating from Williamsport High School, where he was a Washington County wrestling champion, because he wanted to serve his country and because the Navy offers educational opportunities. He enlisted in the Navy, and he reported to Naval Station Norfolk in May of 2011. Petty Officer Mayo's mother, who is a geriatric nursing assistant, said he always wanted to work in law enforcement.

Randy Longnecker, Petty Officer Mayo's former guidance counselor at Williamsport High School, recalled him as a kind and easygoing student who earned good grades, saying:

> He always wanted to make sure he was doing the right thing. He liked athletics and being part of a team. He must have fallen in love with the Navy.

Petty Officer Mayo served tours of duty in Rota, Spain, and in Bahrain. He earned the Good Conduct Award, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon. He was a distinguished member of the Navy.

Americans are privileged and fortunate to have such brave and outstanding young men and women serving in our Armed Forces. We must never forget the sacrifices they and their families make on our behalf in defense of freedom.

Petty Officer Mayo has made the ultimate sacrifice. While his death is tragic, we should remember and honor the way he lived and how he voluntarily chose to save a fellow sailor from harm. He is an American hero.

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.

Mr. CRAPO. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

OWENS NOMINATION

Mr. CRAPO. I rise to discuss the nomination of John Owens to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. Owens, who currently works as a lawyer in California, has been nominated to fill the seat that has been held for the last 25 years by Judge Stephen Trott of Idaho.

Judge Trott took senior status on December 31, 2004, making the Trott seat the longest current vacancy of any seat on the Federal circuit courts.

That doesn't mean that there haven't been previous attempts to fill this seat. In a letter to the Idaho Senate delegation in 2003, then White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales stated:

> I also want to make clear the President's commitment to nominate an Idahoan for a second Ninth Circuit seat if Judge Trott retires or assumes senior status while President Bush is still in office. Idaho has had two Ninth Circuit seats for more than a decade, and that allotment is appropriate.

As such, when Judge Trott did take senior status the following year, President Bush nominated Judge Randy Smith of Idaho to the Trott seat. At the same time another nominee was pending in the Senate to fill another Idaho vacancy on the Ninth Circuit.

Regrettably, Senate Democrats used the longstanding Senate rules that were available at that time to block the confirmation of both Idaho nominees. The reason given by the California delegation for blocking the Randy Smith nomination to the Trott seat made clear that the objections had nothing to do with Judge Smith's qualifications and that they were willing to support his confirmation to the other Idaho seat, the Nelson seat, which is ultimately what happened.

As such, the California delegation blocked Randy Smith's nomination to the Trott seat, not because they believed he was not qualified but because they wanted the seat moved to California—and he was not a Californian.

The so-called Trott seat on the Ninth Circuit has been held by five different judges, including Judge Trott, since it was first created in 1935.

The first judge to hold that seat was from Oregon. The next two judges to hold that seat were from Washington State. Judge Sneed of California, the only judge in that seat to maintain his chambers in California, was the next to hold the seat. Finally, as I mentioned earlier, Judge Trott was the next to hold that seat, and he has maintained his chambers in Idaho for his entire 25 years on the bench.

Despite the fact that California already has more than 20—that is right, more than 20—active and senior judges on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the California delegation apparently believes that Californians have been denied justice for the past 25 years and that the only remedy is to add yet another California judge, leaving the State of Idaho with only one, single active judgeship on the Ninth Circuit. Senator RISCH and I had multiple conversations with the White House counsel in President Obama's first term where we expressed our interest in working with the White House and the California delegation to reach a resolution to this long-standing dispute in a way that would satisfy both delegations.

Clearly, the Idaho delegation and the Idaho people are disappointed by the President's decision to decline to nominate an Idahoan to fill the Trott seat.

It is even more disappointing that declining to submit any nominee for the Trott seat in his entire first term, the President has chosen to wait until the Senate Democrats unilaterally broke the longstanding Senate rules regarding the consideration of nominees in order to push through this nomination, rather than working with the Idaho and California delegations to develop a mutually agreeable solution.

If these new Senate rules had been in place when Judge Trott first took senior status, the California delegation would not have had the opportunity it took advantage of to block the appointment of Idaho nominees to this seat.

This dispute is not about the qualifications of Mr. Owens. He has been rated unanimously well qualified by the American Bar Association, and I would be happy to work with the California delegation to support his nomination for the next California vacancy on the Ninth Circuit.

But I cannot support a process that is the result of an unfair breaking of the Senate's rules in order to push through a nominee that takes away a seat that has been an Idaho seat on the Ninth Circuit for 25 years, leaving Idaho with only one seat on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Sadly, because of the Senate Democrats' rule change, the Idaho delegation will not have the opportunity to stop this effort.

Therefore, I will vote no on this nomination, and my hope is that, if confirmed, Mr. Owens will make the same decision that Judge Trott did 25 years ago by also choosing to maintain his chambers in Idaho.

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.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I have come to the floor to urge my colleagues to support the nomination of John Owens to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. This was approved by the Judiciary Committee without dissent.

I would like to quickly mention his qualifications. He received his bachelor's with high distinction from the University of California in 1993 and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. He graduated first in his class at Stanford Law School in 1996.

From 1996 to 1997 he was law clerk to Judge J. Clifford Wallace, a noted conservative jurist appointed by President Nixon to the Ninth Circuit. He then went on to serve as a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

In 2001 John Owens became a Federal prosecutor, joining the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles, California. He began in the general crimes section, prosecuting a wide variety of violent crimes—drug crimes. He also served in the public corruption and government fraud section.

From 2004 to 2012, he served in the U.S. Attorney's Office in San Diego.

There, primarily his focus was prosecuting complex crimes, including fraud, health care, money laundering, public corruption, and national security.

He has had occasion to receive more than one award, among them the Director's Award for Superior Performance from the Justice Department. Mr. Owens has broad support, and the American Bar Association has given him their highest rating of ''well qualified.''

The problem that has arisen around this nomination, though, is not really his qualifications because the record will bear those qualifications out. It is the longstanding discussion over the seat vacated by Judge Stephen Trott. There is a history here, and I would like to explain it.

This seat has been vacant for over 9 years—since Judge Trott took senior status in December 2004. It is the longest running vacancy in the entire Federal judiciary. The Ninth Circuit has the greatest number of pending appeals per panel. It takes longer than other circuits to resolve an appeal. It makes no sense for this seat on the busiest circuit to stay vacant any longer.

My colleagues from Idaho have asserted that this is a vacancy which should be filled by someone from their State. Let me explain why that is not the case.

Judge Trott, whom Mr. Owens would replace, spent his entire legal career in California before joining the Justice Department under President Reagan. Throughout his career he was licensed to practice law in one State—California. Beginning in 1965 he served as county prosecutor in Los Angeles. In 1975 he sought the position of DA from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors after then-district attorney Joseph Busch passed away. When John Van De Kamp was named district attorney, Trott was chosen as his chief deputy, the second in command in the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. In 1981 President Reagan appointed Mr. Trott to be U.S. attorney for the Central District of California.

All these things are happening in California. He was recommended for the U.S. attorney position by Senator S.I. Hayakawa of California.

In 1982, while serving as U.S. attorney, he again submitted an application to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to become DA after the DA, John Van De Kamp, was elected to be California's attorney general.

Trott was nominated by President Reagan in 1983 to serve as Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division at the Department of Justice. At his confirmation hearing for that position, Senator Pete Wilson of California introduced him. Judge Trott's official Judiciary Committee biography states that his legal residence at the time was California.

Now, this is all about whether Trott occupies an Idaho seat or a California seat.

In 1986 he was nominated by President Reagan to be Associate Attorney General. Once again Senator Wilson of California introduced him at his confirmation hearing, and once again his official Judiciary Committee biography states that his legal residence at the time was California.

In 1987 President Reagan nominated Trott to the Ninth Circuit. The Judiciary Committee sent blue slips to Senators Wilson and Cranston of California. That is the point. The point is that historically Judge Trott has occupied a California seat. He stated in his committee questionnaire that his ''two clients have been the People of the State of California and the Government of the United States.''

Judge Trott was confirmed in 1988 to a seat previously held by Judge Joseph Sneed, a California nominee. That judge's connection to the Ninth Circuit prior to his appointment was his 9-year tenure as professor at Stanford Law School. Judge Sneed established his chambers in San Francisco. These are the facts.

Judge Trott was a California nominee to a California seat on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, as was his predecessor. Once confirmed, however, Judge Trott made a personal choice to establish his chambers in Idaho. This personal choice—essentially an arbitrary occurrence—cannot result in a State losing a judgeship to another State.

As we all know, the overwhelming practice of administrations and Senates of both parties has been to retain each State's representation on its respective circuit. Just look at the makeup of the circuits represented by the members of the Judiciary Committee. Both Iowans on the Eighth Circuit occupy Iowa seats. Three Alabamians on the Eleventh Circuit occupy Alabama seats. All of the Texas judges on the Fifth Circuit, who are not the first occupants of their seats, were preceded by Texans. The Senate recently confirmed Carolyn McHugh to the Tenth Circuit. Judge McHugh was strongly supported by Senators HATCH and LEE, and she replaced Michael Murphy, who had been a Utah nominee.

I could go through the history of each circuit, and the same pattern would emerge time after time. This is not by accident. There is a reason for it. Presidents of either party must know which Senators to consult, and Senators must know which vacancies to make recommendations for.

This might sound like inside baseball to some, but it is fundamental to the Senate's advice and consent role, and no Senator of either party would allow the arbitrary occurrence of a judge's personal choice of residence to remove a judgeship from the Senator's home State. This is a precedent this body cannot allow to be set.

Some might accuse California of trying to take more than its share of seats. This is simply not so. There is no objective reason for the Trott seat to be transferred to Idaho, where Judge N. Randy Smith already occupies that State's seat on the circuit.

By every metric—population, appeals generated, district court caseload—California has far less than its proportional share of circuit judgeships and Idaho already has its fair share. In fact, if Idaho were to get an additional judgeship, its representation on the Ninth Circuit would be 5½ times its share of caseload. That is ridiculous. Idaho would have twice as many seats as Montana and the State of our Presiding Officer, Hawaii, have even though those States generate more Ninth Circuit cases than Idaho. Nothing supports removing this seat from California to Idaho—not history, not population, not caseload. Nothing.

Let me conclude by saying this: I don't begrudge the Senators from Idaho seeking additional Federal judicial resources for their State. Senators CRAPO and RISCH have introduced a bill to create a new judgeship on the Federal district court in Idaho. I represent four judicial districts that virtually always have caseloads at judicial emergency levels. One of them—the Eastern District of California—is the most overburdened judicial district in the country and has a caseload that is more than double the national average. So I understand the desire of the Senators from Idaho to ensure that a sufficient number of Federal judges are present in their State to resolve the disputes of their constituents. In fact, I am a cosponsor of the Federal Judgeship Act of 2013, which would create all the new judgeships recommended by the Judicial Conference, including one for Idaho. But the fact remains this seat on the Ninth Circuit was previously held by two Californians and it should be filled by a Californian. I very much hope the Californian will be John Owens, who has an impeccable record, bipartisan support, and whom I am proud to have recommended to President Obama, and whom I would urge my colleagues to support.

I yield the floor.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, we are once again spending unnecessary floor time overcoming a procedural obstacle so we can move to an up-or-down vote on a judicial nomination. John Owens is nominated to fill the longest open vacancy on our Federal courts. For more than 9 years, the busiest circuit court in our Nation—the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit—has been running at less than full strength. In 2013, the Ninth Circuit had 12,761 appeals filed, several thousand more appeals than the next busiest circuit. It also had 14,171 appeals pending, three times more than the next busiest circuit. Each judge in that circuit has nearly 525 appeals pending per active judge. That is nearly 70 more appeals pending per active judge than the next busiest circuit. These caseloads are not sustainable and the delay in resolving these appeals hurts the American people. We should and must approve Mr.

Owens's nomination, along with Michelle Friedland's nomination to the Ninth Circuit, as soon as possible.

Mr. Owens was first nominated last August and his early October hearing date had to be moved after Republicans forced a shutdown of our government. A hearing on his nomination was finally held in late October. Mr. Owens could and should have been confirmed before we adjourned last year. Instead, because Republicans refused to consent to hold any nominations in the Senate, every single one had to be returned to the President at the end of last year. They then had to be re-nominated and re-processed through committee this year and Mr. Owens was voted out of committee on a voice vote, without dissent, on January 16, 2014.

Mr. Owens is among six circuit nominees pending on the Senate floor. We last voted on a circuit nominee during the last work period in early March and before that we voted on a circuit court nominee in early January. If Republicans continue to obstruct the Senate from having up-or-down votes on uncontroversial judicial nominees, at our current pace of filing cloture petitions once every month or so, we will not have time this year to vote on even those who are currently pending on the Senate floor.

We have not had a vote on a judicial nomination this year that was not subject to a Republican filibuster. For all but two Republican Senators, I have started to notice a pattern of voting to end filibusters only if a nominee is from a State with at least one Republican home State Senator. Most recently this happened yesterday on the cloture vote for Judge Edward Smith of Pennsylvania. It should not require a judicial nominee to be from a State with one or more Republican home State Senators for some Senators to do the right thing. Filling vacancies so that our Federal judiciary can be fully functioning should not be a partisan issue.

Born in Washington, DC, Mr. Owens earned his B.A., with high distinction, from the University of California, Berkeley, and his J.D., with distinction, Order of the Coif, from Stanford Law School. At Stanford, he was the Nathan Abbott Scholar, an award given to the student with the highest cumulative point average in the class. Mr. Owens served as executive editor of the Stanford Law Review where he earned the Stanford Law Review Board of Editors Award.

After law school, Mr. Owens served as a law clerk to Judge J. Clifford Wallace of the Ninth Circuit and for Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg of the United States Supreme Court. He has been a litigator in both public and private practice. In 1998, he joined the U.S. Department of Justice, where he would later serve as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California and the Southern District of California. In 2008, Mr. Owens was promoted to serve as the Deputy Chief of Major Frauds in the Southern District office and later the Chief of the Criminal Division. In 2012, he rejoined private practice as a partner at Munger, Tolles & Olson where he presently works. Over the course of his legal career, he has been counsel of record in more than 20 cases before the court on which he is nominated to serve.

Mr. Owens has the support of his home State Senators—Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator BOXER. I hope my fellow Senators will join me today to vote to end the filibuster of Mr. Owen's nomination.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate shall proceed to executive session.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Patty Murray, Bill Nelson, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jack Reed, Tammy Baldwin, Jon Tester, Tom Udall, Bernard Sanders, Michael F. Bennet, Christopher A. Coons, Elizabeth Warren, Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Blumenthal, Richard J. Durbin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Ninth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 89 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Carper	Harkin
Begich	Casey	Heinrich
Bennet	Coons	Heitkamp
Blumenthal	Donnelly	Hirono
Booker	Durbin	Johnson (SD)
Boxer	Feinstein	Kaine
Brown	Franken	King
Cantwell	Gillibrand	Klobuchar
Cardin	Hagan	Landrieu
Leahy	Murray	Stabenow
Levin	Nelson	Tester
Manchin	Pryor	Udall (CO)
Markey	Reed	Udall (NM)
McCaskill	Reid	Walsh
Menendez	Sanders	Warner
Merkley	Schatz	Warren
Mikulski	Schumer	Whitehouse
Murphy	Shaheen	Wyden

NAYS—44

Alexander	Enzi	McConnell
Ayotte	Fischer	Murkowski
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Chambliss	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Scott
Coburn	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Collins	Johanns	Thune
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Cornyn	Kirk	Vitter
Crapo	Lee	Wicker
Cruz	McCain	

NOT VOTING—2

Moran	Rockefeller

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 54, the nays are 44.

The motion to invoke cloture is agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate resumes legislative session.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 333, H.R. 3979, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Harry Reid, Jack Reed, Patty Murray, Bill Nelson, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tammy Baldwin, Jon Tester, Tom Udall, Bernard Sanders, Michael F. Bennet, Christopher A. Coons, Elizabeth Warren, Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Blumenthal, Richard J. Durbin, Patrick J. Leahy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 333, H.R. 3979, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 65, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 90 Leg.]

YEAS—65

Ayotte	Harkin	Murray
Baldwin	Heinrich	Nelson
Begich	Heitkamp	Portman
Bennet	Heller	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Johnson (WI)	Rockefeller
Brown	Kaine	Sanders
Cantwell	King	Schatz
Cardin	Kirk	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Landrieu	Stabenow
Coats	Leahy	Tester
Collins	Levin	Toomey
Coons	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Corker	Markey	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Walsh
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	

NAYS—34

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Risch
Blunt	Graham	Roberts
Boozman	Grassley	Rubio
Burr	Hatch	Scott
Chambliss	Hoeven	Sessions
Coburn	Inhofe	Shelby
Cochran	Isakson	Thune
Cornyn	Johanns	Vitter
Crapo	Lee	Wicker
Cruz	McCain	
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—1

Moran

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 65, the nays are 34.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MATTHEW H. TUELLER, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Matthew H. Tueller, of Utah, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Yemen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

If there is no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Matthew H. Tueller, of Utah, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Yemen?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I wish to thank all of my colleagues for this very strong bipartisan vote to move a step closer to restoring unemployment insurance benefits for over 2 million Americans. I particularly wish to thank Senator HELLER, whose leadership from the beginning has been instrumental, as well as Senator COLLINS, whose leadership, wise counsel, and thoughtful proposals have been one of the really strong forces sustaining our efforts throughout. I also thank Senator PORTMAN, who has consistently thought about progressive changes for our training programs so that people are better prepared for jobs, as well as Senator MURKOWSKI for her support, and Senator KIRK, both of them valuable contributors. I thank all of my colleagues today who came forward.

This is not the end of the story, but it is an important step forward for over 2 million Americans who are looking desperately for work, who need the benefits, and who will contribute to our economy.

With that, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT ALASKA EARTHQUAKE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 400, submitted earlier today.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 400) recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Great Alaska Earthquake, which struck the State of Alaska at 5:36 p.m. on Good Friday, March 27, 1964, honoring those who lost their lives in the Great Alaska Earthquake and associated tsunamis, and expressing continued support for research on earthquake and tsunami prediction and mitigation strategies.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, over the past several days we have all watched the news of the massive landslide in Washington State. We have watched that with sadness, with shock—truly an awful, awful episode. Our hearts, our prayers are certainly with all of those who have been affected by this terrible tragedy. We continue to hope for the best as rescue and recovery efforts continue.

Today I have come to the floor to speak about a different natural disaster. This is a natural disaster that affected Alaska on Good Friday exactly 50 years ago today, in 1964. This is the Great Alaska Earthquake, the Good Friday Earthquake, the epic earthquake of 1964.

At the time that Alaska was struck by this massive earthquake, I was a young child. I was living in the southeastern community of Wrangell, AK. I have a map here, a map of the State of Alaska. The epicenter of the earthquake is here in the south central area. About a year prior to the quake, my family and I moved down to the small southeastern community of Wrangell, tucked safely in the inland passage waterways here.

We were all looking forward to Easter. When the earthquake hit, I certainly did not know that we had been struck by a massive, massive 9.2 earthquake of the magnitude on the Richter scale that decimated southcentral Alaska. The earthquake struck at 5:36 in the evening. I did not know that what had just occurred was the largest earthquake to strike the United States in recorded history. It is the second largest earthquake ever recorded on modern instrumentation.

Those of us who lived in Alaska at the time have memories of what happened on Good Friday 50 years ago. We have stories that will live with us for generations and passed down from generation to generation. You can talk to Alaskans about it: Where were you in the quake of 1964?

We had just moved, as I said, from Anchorage to Wrangell, AK. We did not feel the shake in Wrangell. We waited

for the big waves to come. We waited for the tsunami. We sat listening to the radio. But our home was situated directly on the beach. Everyone was told to move up to higher ground. So we moved everybody in the family, five kids at the time, up the hill. We went to my first grade teacher's house, which was really quite exciting for me.

We were allowed to stay up late into the evening. As a small child, there was a buzz. It was kind of exciting but kind of scary because we did not know what was happening in other parts of the State. My mom had basically packed some diapers for the smallest of the children in the family. She tells me that she brought along her silver tea set. That is the only thing that she brought from the house, along with the five kids.

We also tell the story of the home that we lived in just before we had moved to Wrangell. It was situated in a residential area called Turnagain. Turnagain was the area that was immediately and massively hit.

This is the Turnagain neighborhood. Our home that we lived in prior to moving to Wrangell was situated about two blocks back from the bluff. After the earthquake, the bluff slid down taking tens and tens of houses with it. The home that we were in then became bluff property. It was condemned never to be lived in again.

We all have stories of the earthquake. We saw the news accounts as they came slowly to us. We saw the photographs of the collapsed buildings.

I am going to go back to the first picture here. This first one that was up initially is downtown Anchorage, AK, 1964. This is on Fourth Avenue. You can see from the picture the ground just sunk, dropped—the crumpled buildings, the cars cattywumpus.

The destruction and the devastation in the downtown area literally took your breath away. One very photographed picture was the J.C. Penney building which had just recently been constructed. The whole front facade of the J.C. Penney building just crashed down onto the streets and onto the cars below.

This is a picture here of Government Hill Elementary School. I showed you the previous picture where my family and I had lived in the neighborhood at Turnagain when I was a child. When my husband and I bought our home, where our sons were raised, it was directly across the street from this property where Government Hill Elementary literally slid down the hill.

As you can see from the picture there, the devastation to the school was extraordinary. Fortunately, it was 5:36 in the evening on Good Friday, and there were no children at the school. But the devastation, the visual impact that still remains as we look back 50 years now at what happened—the stories of loss of property, of damage to property, the stories of loss of life and truly miraculous survival—slowly started to reveal the extent of the destruction from an earthquake that Federal scientists would tell us years later was roughly equivalent to 100 million tons of TNT exploding—massive.

The Good Friday Earthquake reshaped the Alaska landscape. Land was lifted 33 feet in some places, and then in other places it sank in the ground—sank as much as 6 feet in places. Cliffs and buildings crumbled, forests and towns were flooded. Huge waves approximately 200 feet high were measured near the community of Valdez. A 200-foot wall of water was coming into the community of Valdez. Communities were literally washed off the map in Anchorage.

This is a picture here of Seward, which again is in Resurrection Bay along the coast, but the waves literally came in and swept everything out with it. But it was not just one wave. It was a series of waves. Anchorage, which is our State's most populous city and really the center of infrastructure in the State, was just 74 miles from the epicenter of the quake.

That is where we see so many pictures of the tremendous damage there. There has been a series of articles in our local newspaper, the Anchorage Daily News, leading up to this historic 50th anniversary. It is a series written by Mike Dunham. I ask unanimous consent that a portion of these series be printed in the RECORD.

But in the series discussing the tsunamis that hit Alaska, I would like to share with my colleagues some of the information that Mike outlined. He said NOAA's National Geophysical Data Center puts the total number of deaths resulting from the Great Alaska Earthquake of 1964 at 139. Fifteen of those deaths are attributed to falling buildings or crumbling ground during the quake itself. The rest were killed by the water. Thirty-two people died when a wave 30-feet high built up in Valdez. Similar-sized waves took 12 lives in Seward, and 15 in Kodiak and its surrounding villages. Another dozen perished when a wall of water 40-feet high smashed into Whittier in the Prince William Sound village of Chenega. One-third of the population, 23 people, were swept away by a 90-foot wave.

One thing that I found very fascinating in understanding some of the attributes of this earthquake and the tsunamis that came is that in many places the ground was still shaking when the water hit. Keep in mind, this earthquake lasted 4½ minutes—4½ minutes where the earth is lurching and shuddering and shaking. That is a horribly long time.

The first tsunami that hit Valdez, I am told, hit just 2 minutes after the quake had begun. So imagine the terror. You have got the ground moving all around you, up and down, lurching back and forth, and 2 minutes into it, you have a tsunami at your doorstep.

The loss of life from the tsunamis did not stop at the Alaska border, though. Four children died in Beverly Beach State Park in Oregon; 12 people died in California, mostly in the waves that destroyed Crescent City's harbor.

But we know that it could have been much worse. The death toll was low for an earthquake of this magnitude. As I mentioned, it was after work. It was on a holiday.

It occurred in an area with a small population that constructed buildings from wood, not bricks or other heavier materials. But the Good Friday Earthquake and the subsequent tsunamis that followed caused some $3.75 billion in damage and that is in today's dollars. This is 50 years ago, so $3.75 billion is amazing.

Also, consider this was largely done to a State that was barely 5 years old, but the impacts reached far beyond Alaska. Tsunamis also caused damage to many of our Pacific neighbors, including Canada, Washington, Oregon, California, Washington, and Hawaii.

Those tsunamis destroyed everything in their path. They destroyed houses, cars, boats, and fishing gear all along the Pacific coast. In Ocean City, WA, a bridge over the Copalis River collapsed. In Crescent City, CA, a dockside tavern was destroyed. In Hilo, HI, 12.5 foot waves overran the waterfront. Seiches, which are seismically induced water waves in rivers, lakes, bayous, and harbors, caused minor damage. It wasn't extensive damage, but it caused damage along the gulf coasts of Louisiana and Texas. Think about how this massive earthquake reverberated around the world.

If we look again to the map that has the epicenter, we would think the extent would only be where the epicenter lines, the falt limits go, but in fact when we account for the tsunami effect, it truly was an amazing instance where Mother Nature came together in a massive and a violent way.

As we think about the devastation, the loss of life, the lost property, we have to ask the question whether anything good can come from a tragedy such as the Good Friday Earthquake, but I think the answer is ultimately yes. We came together, Alaskans came together in the aftermath of the quake and the tsunamis to help rebuild the worst hit communities. We rebuilt them to withstand earthquakes and in locations that are hopefully protected from the ravages of future tsunamis. We set aside parks to remember the historic earthquake and to prevent future building on landslide-prone cliffs. Out of the devastation we did gain a better understanding of what is happening below the surface in Alaska and other earthquake-prone areas.

In the 1960s we had very little information about what caused the massive shifts in the Good Friday Earthquake. There was very little understanding of the giant tectonic plates that make up the surface of the Earth and how their movement causes earthquakes. The 1964 earthquake resulted in greater seismic monitoring across the country

and has led scientists to have a far better understanding of how earthquakes occur and where they occur. We can now better protect our citizens by implementing better building codes and preparing for earthquake disaster response in earthquake-prone regions, thereby reducing the chance that another earthquake would result in so many deaths.

The tsunamis that were spawned by the Good Friday Earthquake provided scientists with a unique and important set of tsunami arrival times and heights that have been used to validate new models of tsunami propagation. These models have allowed our scientists and emergency authorities to warn coastal populations of potential tsunamis, protecting life and property.

We see these exercises and drills conducted certainly in my State, I know in Hawaii, and in our coastal communities.

The science has come a long way in the past 50 years and Alaska has too. As we mark this historic anniversary, we remember those who perished in the Good Friday Earthquake.

We salute the men and women who help protect our safety by monitoring and researching earthquakes and tsunamis, both in our State and in others. We thank the first responders who helped Alaskans in 1964, just as we thank those who are helping with the recovery in Washington today. Let us also use this occasion to consider whether we ourselves are prepared for the worst should we ever face a similar day of reckoning in the future.

To recognize this historic event, I have submitted a Senate resolution that commemorates the Great Alaska Earthquake. My colleague from Alaska, Senator BEGICH, and my colleagues from Oregon, California, and Hawaii have joined me.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Anchorage Daily News, Mar. 24, 2014]

TSUNAMIS: WARNING SYSTEMS IMPROVED SINCE GREAT ALASKA EARTHQUAKE BUT UNLIKELY TO HELP

(By Mike Dunham)

NOAA's National Geophysical Data Center puts the total number of deaths resulting from the Great Alaska Earthquake of 1964 at 139. Fifteen of those deaths are attributed to falling buildings or crumbling ground during the quake itself.

The rest were killed by water.

Thirty-two people died when a wave 30 feet high boiled up in Port Valdez. Similar sized waves took 12 lives in Seward and 15 in Kodiak and its surrounding villages. Another dozen perished when a wall of water 40 feet high smashed into Whittier. In the Prince William Sound village of Chenega, a third of the population—23 people—was swept away by a 90-foot wave.

Smaller numbers of casualties were reported in scattered settlements across the region, from Cape St. Elias to Port Nellie Juan. One death took place at Shoup Bay on Valdez Arm, where the wave may have splashed 220 feet up the Chugach mountains.

In many places, the ground was still shaking as the water hit.

''We have this picture in our heads that first an earthquake happens, then the tsunami comes,'' said Mike West, State Seismologist at the Alaska Earthquake Information Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. ''But in Alaska's fiords, something else happens.''

In the second biggest earthquake ever recorded, that ''something else'' was massive.

''The entire floor of Prince William Sound failed,'' said Cindi Preller, Tsunami Program Manager for NOAA Alaska Region. ''It was chaos.''

WAVE TRAINS

There are different kinds of tsunamis and the 1964 earthquake set off a variety of them.

One was a general global splashing generated by the magnitude of the quake. The 1964 event was so strong that it made the whole world ''ring like a bell,'' reads a U.S. Geological Survey pamphlet. Vibrations shook the planet for weeks and caused measurable sloshing as far away as Florida. Shifts in water levels were recorded in 47 states, including land-locked ones. Even in South Africa—about as far from Alaska as one can get—fluctuations in well water were noted.

One type of tsunami produced by the earthquake, seiche waves, caused no casualties, but they were violent enough to sink boats in Louisiana. Seiche action refers to standing waves in enclosed or confined water. They can be caused in different ways. Those caused by seismic disruptions can occur in places with no direct connection to bodies of water near the source of an earthquake.

Tectonic tsunamis are created directly by the shock of a fracture. They tend to come in a series of waves rather than a single surge, like the ripples formed when you plunk a rock into a calm pool and the displaced water spreads out in rings.

In the case of an undersea fracture, the displacement of the water comes from below. University of Alaska Anchorage geology professor Kristine Crossen said the sudden upthrust at one spot of Prince William Sound was so large that it took two minutes for the water to run off it.

''When the ocean bottom is moved, it sets up a wave train,'' said Peter Haeussler, U.S. Geological Survey research geologist.

These trains can travel thousands of miles at speeds of 500 miles an hour. In the deep water of the open ocean they seem small. But as they enter shallow water near shore, they grow slower and taller.

Current thinking is that, in 1964, tectonic waves were generated from two areas in the massive rupture, said Preller. One was near the epicenter, where the quake began, in northern Prince William Sound. The other was near Kodiak, hundreds of miles away. These waves took lives and leveled buildings from Alaska to California, often in concert with the most lethal kind of wave to emanate from the 1964 quake, landslide tsunamis.

These happen when the earthquake causes an avalanche. That's what happened in Lituya Bay in Glacier Bay National Park on July 9, 1958. Tumbling rock and ice sent up a megatsunami 1,720 feet high, the largest wave recorded in modern times.

The steep, mile-high mountains we see above ground throughout the southern coast of Alaska are mirrored by a similar submarine geography, where slopes can be further encumbered by millions of years of volcanic residue, glacial silt and other muck. A strong shake can send incalculable tons of material tumbling underwater, unseen and undetected until the displaced ocean shoots into the air.

''Those are really devilish,'' West said. ''And they're not currently predictable.''

SUDDEN DEATH

Valdez was founded during the gold rush on glacial fill and alluvial deposits surrounded by precipitous mountains. The ground at the old townsite was flat and easy to build on and ran right to the edge of a deep water port.

When the earthquake began, the delta deposits liquified. A mile of waterfront slumped into the bottom of the harbor, pushing water toward the open sea.

A home movie taken from the deck of the freighter Chena, tied to the city dock at the time of the quake, shows the 400-foot ship sinking into a giant hole in the water, the bottom of the harbor exposed. Then, with ferocious frothing, the ocean crashes back.

Those on the dock—citizens, curious children and workers—were killed in the first seconds of the quake. Amazingly, the Chena rode out the surge that carried it into the town and left it high and dry—temporarily. New waves hit, some after midnight, and floated it out to sea again.

''We think Valdez had two landslipping events,'' said Preller—one in Valdez Arm, the other right under the dock.

Most Valdez businesses and half of the homes in town were destroyed. Fuel tanks split open and their contents caught fire, a catastrophe that would be repeated in the ports of Whittier, Seward and Crescent City.

The fiords and coves throughout Prince William Sound, the area nearest where the quake began, experienced similar underwater landslides causing waves estimated to have splashed as much as 220 feet above sea level. Most of these places had few if any residents.

But there were people in Whittier and Seward. In those towns, as in Valdez, the narrow harbors confined by steep slopes channelized the water into a bore, amplifying the wave action like a giant bathtub.

Arriving immediately after the quake, or even while it was still rumbling, they gave residents no warning and little chance to escape. ''The first tsunamis hit two minutes after the earthquake started,'' said Preller. The quake lasted for 4½ minutes.

The island of Chenega, southwest of Valdez, is not a dead-end inlet, like Whittier. But it is surrounded by precipitous submarine channels. ''Prince William Sound is an environment where the inlets are extremely deep,'' said Preller. The underwater valleys had much the same effect as the above-water fiords.

The first wave rose smoothly but with astonishing speed, catching people trying to outrun it, trapping others in their homes. A second wave struck more violently, smashing every structure in the village except for the school. A third scattered whatever was left.

Survivors huddled around a fire through the night with no way to get word of their plight to the outside world.

EVACUATION

Most people in Kodiak figured the big quake was shaking only their neighborhood. The first inkling that it might be more serious came when they noticed that long distance phone service was out.

In the village of Kaguyak on the south end of Kodiak island, however, residents observed the odd swell on the ocean. They began moving away from the shore and sent radio warnings to nearby communities. Warnings picked up elsewhere on the island, alerting the people of Kodiak city 20 minutes before the first wave arrived.

The city's fire trucks ran their sirens to warn the population. Police went door to door urging evacuation and a line of cars started driving up Pillar Mountain. The town's taxi fleet used their CB radios to establish an ad hoc communications network.

The first surge came into Kodiak harbor at low tide, about half an hour after the quake. It didn't reach much past the docks and is thought to have been a landslide tsunami. ''It came much sooner than we would have expected from a tectonic tsunami,'' said Preller. Most of the affected towns experienced both types of wave, she said.

Thirty minutes later a second wave came into the city, pushing boats into the city streets, floating cars away, wrenching buildings from their foundations and causing walls to collapse. It was not the towering breaker that swept up the Chena in Valdez or wiped out a sawmill and its workers in Whittier, but more on the lines of a large swell.

''Survivors most often describe tsunamis as a rapidly rising tide,'' said Haeussler. ''They're like a continuous rise of the ocean that never stops. Often you cannot outrun it. It just overwhelms everything in its path.''

At least three more waves ripped through the town in the next few hours. It's presumed that the highest reached 26 feet above mean low tide level. But no one saw it. It came in pitch dark after midnight when most of the population had moved up the hill. Kodiak fatalities tended to come not from people on land, but from those who were in fishing boats caught in the surge.

LONG-DISTANCE KILLER

Kodiak was luckier than Crescent City, Calif. Residents there received a warning three hours after the Alaska quake began. Many evacuated before the tectonic wave came in, just before midnight. Half an hour later a second wave, lower than the first, rolled into the harbor.

''People thought that was it,'' said Lori Dengler, a professor of geology at Humboldt State University in Northern California. ''They came back.''

At 1:20 a.m., a wave swirled into the waterfront that broke the tide gauge. The fourth wave is estimated to have reached 22 feet, Dengler said. ''It was terribly timed. It came just at the top of the tide.''

More than 100 homes were destroyed. Eleven people died. Total damage was estimated at $23 million.

Others died in the rising waters at Newport, Ore. and Klamath River, Calif. $600,000 in damage was sustained by boats and harbor facilities in San Raphael, Calif.

In Hawaii, tsunamis from the Alaska earthquake caused about $70,000 in damage. Waves in several places were as high as the one that devastated Crescent City.

But no lives were lost. When the tsunami warning sirens went off, the Hawaiians paid heed. They had learned their lesson from another Alaska earthquake 18 years before.

On April 1, 1946, an Aleutian quake with a magnitude perhaps as high as 8.1 set off a wave that wiped out the concrete, five-story high Scotch Cap Lighthouse on Unimak Island. Hours later, Hawaiians flocked to the shores to observe the peculiar super-low tide. Curious crowds gathered on the beach at Hilo. Children ran to explore the exposed sea bottom. By the time they saw the wave coming it was too late to get away; 165 people died, including six in Alaska.

As a result, a system of ocean-based alarms was established to detect tsunami activity in areas particularly prone to seismic shifts. A line of detectors follows the Alaska coast where earthquake activity is particularly high.

EARLY WARNING

The detectors do a good job of alerting populations far from where the earthquakes take place, Dengler said. She noted a tsunami that hit Crescent City following the 2011 Japan quake was within inches of what the data predicted.

''But near the source area, they're not helpful,'' she said.

That's because a landslide tsunami will get to shore before the warning does, if there's any warning at all.

''We cannot detect when a landslide has happened,'' said Preller. ''If you're near the ocean when there's an earthquake, get to high ground and stay there. Don't wait for a warning. The earthquake is your warning.''

Nonetheless, Dengler said, the progress in long-distance tsunami warning has come a long way since 1964. ''Back then it took three hours after the quake for Crescent City to get the warning. Today it would be two or three minutes.''

Preller called the Japanese tsunami warning system ''the best on the planet.'' That country has made some intriguing progress in providing early warnings for earthquakes.

''From the moment an earthquake initiates, you usually have some period of time before the shaking reaches you,'' said West. ''If you can nail down that earthquake immediately when it happens, there's the potential of providing several tens of seconds of warning. That's enough time to shut down transit systems or have a surgeon put down his scalpel.''

West is impressed by Japan's combination of good instrumentation and a warning notification system. ''It was quite successful in the 2011 earthquake,'' he said. He sent a link to a Youtube video that shows a computer screen just before the massive earthquake and tsunami of March 11 that year. An automated voice is counting down from 29 seconds. At the moment the countdown reaches zero, the rattling begins.

''California, Oregon and Washington are in the process of developing such systems,'' West said. ''Gov. Jerry Brown has mandated that California will do this.

''There's a legitimate discussion to be held as to whether or not such an investment would be worth it here. But nothing like it is currently in development for Alaska.''

Wednesday: Witness to destruction

Shortly after tsunamis destroyed much of Seward, school students recorded their experiences with pictures.

Tidal wave vs. tsunami

In 1964 the phrase ''tidal wave'' was universally used by both average Alaskans and experts quoted in the media to describe the giant waves that wrought so much death and damage. Today the preferred term for a wave generated by a solid physical force such as an earthquake, landslide or volcano is tsunami. Tidal waves refer to waves caused by extreme tidal action or wind, including tidal bores or storm surges.

Casualties

There are various numbers given for the number of deaths caused by the Great Alaska Earthquake. The most recent estimate is given by the National Geophysical Data Center as 139, 124 of which were due to tsunamis; however that database does not break down the fatalities by location. ''The casualties are still under discussion,'' said Cindi Preller, Tsunami Program Manager, NOAA Alaska Region.

Is Anchorage in danger?

In theory, a tsunami is possible at any oceanside location. But it's considered improbable in upper Cook Inlet. ''Generally speaking, tsunamis travel better through deep water,'' said Kristine Crossen, head of UAA's geology department. ''Cook Inlet is fairly shallow. It creates a lot of friction on the base of the wave.''

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 400) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I thank you for the opportunity to speak again on this historic event to recognize those who lost lives, lost family, and those who helped to not only ensure that Alaska was able to regroup and regain but knowing we have used these lessons learned 50 years ago to help us going forward.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

ANTIPERSONNEL LANDMINES

Mr. LEAHY. Over the past 20 years I have spoken many times about the toll inflicted on innocent civilians and U.S. soldiers from antipersonnel landmines. I have talked about it in the Senate, in Ottawa, and in most parts of the world.

The reason I have done so is that landmines, like booby traps, are inherently indiscriminate. They are triggered by whomever comes in contact with them, whether an unsuspecting child, a farmer, a refugee, or a soldier. They are the antithesis of a precision guided weapon.

One hundred sixty-one nations, including most of our allies and friends and every European member of NATO, have signed a treaty banning them. One hundred sixty-one nations had the courage to sign that treaty.

Unfortunately, the United States is conspicuously not among them.

In 1994, 20 years ago, in a speech to the U.N. General Assembly, President Bill Clinton called for the elimination of antipersonnel landmines.

Two years later, in 1996, President Clinton said: ''Today I am launching an international effort to ban anti-personnel landmines.''

President Clinton went on to announce a U.S. plan to develop alternatives to landmines, with the goal that the United States would end its use of antipersonnel landmines by 2006.

We had a meeting in Ottawa where nations came together and Canada's Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, called for an antipersonnel landmine treaty. But in 1997 the United States missed an opportunity to be a leader in the international effort to ban antipersonnel mines, when it failed to sign the Mine Ban Treaty.

The year 2006 came and went. President Clinton's administration ended and President George W. Bush served for 8 years. President Obama was then elected and then reelected. In the meantime, U.S. troops fought two long ground wars. They fought those wars without using antipersonnel landmines.

In 2010, along with 67 other Senators, Democrats and Republicans, I sent a letter to President Obama. We commended him for agreeing to review the U.S. Government's policy on antipersonnel mines, and we urged him to conform U.S. policy to the Mine Ban Treaty as a first step. That was 5 years ago. Five years since the start of that review we are still waiting for the results.

After 20 years and three U.S. Presidents, there is no evidence the United States is any closer to joining the treaty than when President Clinton made that speech.

I find it disheartening as an American to think that my country is unwilling to stand with these 161 other countries, many of which real threats, and yet we will not join them.

The Pentagon has long argued that landmines are needed to defend South Korea. In 1996, then-Secretary of Defense William Perry said the Pentagon would ''move vigorously'' to achieve alternative ways to prevent a North Korean attack so they would no longer need landmines.

In the last century, in 1996, they pledged to vigorously. I don't know what their definition of ''vigorous'' is, but after 20 years there is no evidence they have done anything to revise their Korea war plans without antipersonnel mines or that any President has told them to do so.

One could ask what difference it would make if the United States joins the Mine Ban Treaty. As I said, we have not used antipersonnel mines for 23 years. The United States has done more to support humanitarian demining than any other country in the world. We have not exported antipersonnel mines since the Leahy law was passed in 1992, and we have spent many tens of millions of dollars through the Leahy War Victims Fund to aid those injured by mines.

If we are not causing the problem, why bother signing the treaty? Because antipersonnel mines continue to kill and cripple innocent people and because indiscriminate, victim-activated weapons have no place in the arsenal of a civilized country.

Countries as diverse as Afghanistan and Great Britain have signed it.

The United States has by far the most powerful military in the world, and this treaty needs the strong leadership of the United States.

As President Obama said in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize:

> I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do, and isolates and weakens those who don't.

Twenty years after President Clinton's U.N. speech, President Obama can give real meaning to his words by putting the United States on the path to join the treaty. That means destroying what remains of our stockpile of mines. We are never going to use them. Get rid of them. It means revising our Korea war plans to eliminate antipersonnel mines.

President Obama is the only one who could make that happen. Time is running out.

Let me tell a story. During the ill-fated contra war, during the time of the Reagan administration, I was visiting one of the contra camps along the Nicaragua-Honduras border. As I looked from a helicopter, I saw a clearing inside Nicaragua where there was a field hospital. So we decided to land. I talked to the doctors who were treating victims. There was a little boy, about 10 or 12 years old, who came out, and he had a makeshift crutch. He had one leg.

He came from a family who survived from what they could hunt and gather in the jungle along the border. We talked to him, and it turned out he had lost his leg by stepping on an antipersonnel mine—mines that were not going to stop any army, they were just there to terrorize and injure civilians.

This is not a picture of that little boy, but this is an example of what happens. I asked the boy which side put this mine there. He had only a vague knowledge of what the two countries were, that there was a border there. All he knew was that his life was changed forever. He would not be able to earn a living as his parents and grandparents and others had. He had a place to stay only because the doctors had put a pile of rags and sheets in the corner on the dirt floor where other people were recovering from their war wounds.

I became more and more interested in the horrifying toll of landmines around the world, and I met other innocent victims like this young girl her legs and a hand missing. I think of those in conflicts especially children—who saw what they thought was a pretty and shiny toy on the side of the road, and they touched it only to have their limbs blown off or their eyesight lost.

I think of the teenage girl I met in an area where there was a war. I met her at a hospital where she was getting artificial legs through the Leahy War Victims Fund. Her parents had sent her away during the war, where she would be safe. The war ended and she was walking home and saw her parents and started running toward them, and in a flash a landmine explodes and she both her legs were blown off.

After World War I, countries came together to ban poison gas. We had international negotiations to do that. The Pentagon was against it, arguing that they might need to use poison gas sometime. We get the same reaction today about antipersonnel landmines: we might need them some day.

This photograph show one of the places supported by the Leahy War Victims Fund—where they make artificial legs. If any one of the Senators in this body were to lose a leg, our insurance would buy us a high-tech leg to replace it or we might be told: You can have an even better one but it will cost $500 or $1,000 more than your insurance will pay. We would all take out our checkbook and pay it. Here, we are talking about countries in which the per capita income is maybe $300 or $400 a year.

Signing a landmine treaty is not going to by itself stop everything. There are millions of mines still littering countries where the wars ended decades ago.

As I said earlier, the United States, to its credit, has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to clear mines and to help people who have been injured. But why shouldn't the United States of America—the country that should be the moral leader—why shouldn't we step up and sign the treaty? How do we credibly tell others not to use them, when they say: Yes, but you never signed the treaty. You have reserved the right to use them. You are the most powerful Nation on Earth; we are not.

Why shouldn't we?

I am proud of the Leahy War Victims Fund, but I would give anything to think there was no need for it. Maybe that day will come.

I tell President Obama: Time is running out. You know what you should do.

I think if he talked to President Clinton, he would find that President Clinton wishes he had signed it. Let's sign it now. Do that. That can be part of his legacy.

Madam President, 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. BEGICH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

GREAT ALASKAN EARTHQUAKE

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I rise today to remember the Great Alaskan Earthquake, which struck 50 years ago today on Good Friday, March 27, 1964. Over 100 Alaskans died in the earthquake and the resulting tsunami. Entire coastal towns were literally wiped off the map.

I was very young—only 2 years old—but I remember my family telling stories as I was growing up and showing pictures. In those days it was not like we see today—pictures on a computer—because there was none of that existing. I remember in our family of six we always had slideshow night. We had these little slides my mother would put in this carousel, and off it would go and we would be reminded of all the vacations and things we went on, but we would also see these slides about what happened in the earthquake in 1964.

We were lucky. We lived in East Anchorage in half of a small apartment complex, and the only things that broke in our house were these three swinging lights that went back and forth because our house was built on

gravel soil and was very strong and sturdy, in many ways, in its development. But when you look back at the houses on Third Avenue that literally disappeared or Fourth Avenue that collapsed downtown, it was a different story, or around Turnagain, the community out in West Anchorage, that literally fell off and sank.

Today I am honored to join my colleague Senator MURKOWSKI—who I know was on the floor earlier—in cosponsoring a resolution marking the tragic yet important event in our history and thanking those who helped us survive and recover. In those days we had limited access anyway, but when there was an earthquake, especially in a small town or community, the first responders sometimes couldn't get there because of the uniqueness of the situation from the earthquake. But every Alaskan, every first responder, everybody who was available got down to the business of doing everything they could to help people in need. We were coming out of a winter—still cold and yet spring, what we would call a spring winter day.

Alaskans know the importance of tsunami preparedness and warnings and making sure we are prepared for what can happen. Today we are proud to host NOAA's National Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer, AK. I have been there, and it is the most amazing technology, to see what we can do and what we can see or sense through the sensors and other scientific equipment we have to tell us when a tsunami may be occurring or the magnitude of the tsunami. We monitor on a 24-hour basis with scientists.

The tsunami's impact was felt, from our earthquake, as far away as Hawaii, California, and Washington. That is why today I join Senator CANTWELL and Senator SCHATZ in introducing the Tsunami Warning and Educational Reauthorization Act for 2014. This bill would improve NOAA's Tsunami Warning Center, bringing supercomputing power to the tsunami modeling. It would ensure that all coastal weather forecast offices are better prepared to issue tsunami warnings.

The bill also ensures that coastal communities will be more tsunami-resilient through the National Tsunami Hazardous Mitigation Program. It ensures that communities understand tsunami risks, planning to minimize damages, and are ready to bounce back quickly after the damage occurs.

The bill also recognizes the critical role that advancing our understanding and technology through scientific research plays in meeting the tsunami threat.

This bill was originally envisioned by the late Senator Inouye. I have been proud to pick up where he was unable to continue on an issue I know is critical in his home State.

Fifty years ago Alaska was a young State with a bright but uncertain future. We still had foreign fishing vessels coming in and taking our fish just a few miles off the coast. The trans-Alaska oil pipeline and the energy it delivers was just a dream. After the damage from the quake and tsunami, there were serious questions from outside whether Alaska could survive. Keep in mind that this was only a few years after becoming a State. But Alaskans already knew the answer. They knew we would rebuild and become stronger, and we have. Alaska is now the Nation's Arctic energy storehouse and feeds the Nation with sustainable seafood stocks. I know the Presiding Officer understands the value of fisheries and that they are an incredible element of our food inventory and storage for our country. Alaska is a State that is important in this regard, as is the State of Massachusetts.

But we must still be very vigilant against the threat of earthquakes and tsunamis. That is why I introduced this bill, joining again with Senators CANTWELL and SCHATZ in this endeavor. We encourage its swift passage, as it is important to make sure, when it comes to these issues, that no matter where one lives, safety is protected because the devastation is incredible.

Let me end on another personal note. When I think of growing up in Alaska—someone born and raised there—and living in East Anchorage, I can still remember growing up and my dad thinking about where he bought land to build this house, and this apartment building was on incredible soil. But years later, when I became mayor of Anchorage and sat on the city assembly, I remember the great debate on building codes and earthquake capacity and stability and making sure buildings were designed right.

I remember the Federal building, which is now city hall—and I was on the Anchorage Assembly then—and the great debate came up as to whether we were going to renovate or move or something else in regard to the location. But we decided we wanted to stay downtown to keep downtown vibrant. Well, the building was built during a time when it would probably not withstand an earthquake of the magnitude that occurred in the 1964 earthquake.

I remember when we vacated the building and they stripped the building down and left the shell. I walked in to take a tour of the building with the developer. He was showing me what he called the shock absorbers—these incredible columns within the building that, if an earthquake hit, not only would they try to absorb it, they would help the building move up or side to side, absorbing the impact of the earthquake and preserving the building, ensuring that the investment and lives would be saved. To me, it was the most amazing thing because in the old days—as I said, when I grew up—we just put the buildings together, slapped them up, and thanked God we had a home to live in during a cold winter. So the technology has advanced significantly so as to ensure safety in an area that is clearly an earthquake zone.

It is not uncommon for me to be back home and be at a meeting in a hotel or giving a speech in a ballroom or sitting in a home with someone and having a conversation and an earthquake kind of comes through. It is always amazing to me that if I am there with visitors from out of town, they get a little nervous. But as Alaskans, we know we have improved our building codes, we have improved our warning systems, and we have continued to make sure we can minimize or mitigate the damage from those natural disasters that could occur. Again, this bill reauthorization on tsunamis focuses on that. We saw a whole city or town washed off the map—gone—because of the power of a tsunami.

So today I appreciate and remember the history of Alaska and the uniqueness of being there during times of growth and also times of tragedy, but today being part of legislation which in an odd way comes full circle: As a 2-year-old experiencing an earthquake, to where I am today, being able to ensure that not only my State but any coastal State has the capacity to ensure a tsunami warning system is not only the best but the best in the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

WEALTH DISTRIBUTION

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, as the longest serving Independent in the history of the U.S. Congress, I wish to address an issue which I believe does not get the kind of discussion it should from either political party but certainly not from our Republican colleagues—the moral, economic, and political dimensions of the kind of income and wealth inequality which we have in our country today. In my view, this is the most important issue facing the United States because it impacts on virtually every aspect of our lives. It is an issue we must be discussing thoroughly and one in which the American people have to be engaged.

The fact is that while we often speak of the United States of America being the wealthiest Nation on the face of the Earth, that is only partially true, because within the context of total wealth is the reality that the great middle class of this country is disappearing. The reality is we have more people living in poverty today than at any time in the history of the United States of America. The fact is we have by far the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major industrialized nation on Earth. So if we add it all together, yes, we are the wealthiest Nation on Earth, but the reality is the people on top own a huge amount of this wealth while the middle class is shrinking and poverty is increasing.

I will speak to our colleagues and the American people about some of the realities in terms of income and wealth distribution.

Today the top 1 percent owns 38 percent of the financial wealth of America. I wonder how many Americans

know how much the bottom 60 percent owns. I want people to think about it. The top 1 percent owns 38 percent of the financial wealth, and the bottom 60 percent owns 2.3 percent. One family in this country—the Walton family, the owners of Walmart—are now worth as a family $148 billion. This is more wealth than the bottom 40 percent of American society. Today the richest 400 Americans own more wealth than the bottom half of America, 150 million people. This is distribution of wealth—what we own.

The latest information we have in terms of distribution of income is from 2009 through 2012, which says that 95 percent of all new income earned in this country went to the top 1 percent. When we talk about economic growth—2 percent or 4 percent, whatever it is—it doesn't mean much, because almost all of the new income generated in this growth has gone to the very wealthiest people in this country. The top 25 hedge fund managers made last year over $24 billion. This is enough to pay the salaries of more than 425,000 public schoolteachers. Over the past decade, the net worth of the top 400 billionaires in this country has doubled by an astronomical $1 trillion in the last 10 years.

In a moment I will discuss the extraordinary political power of the Koch brothers, a family investing very heavily in the political process, spending hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars to elect rightwing candidates who will protect the interests of the wealthy and the powerful.

To give some idea of what is going on in this economy, everybody should understand that Charles and David Koch—the Koch brothers—are the second wealthiest family in this country. In the last year alone, this one family saw a $12 billion increase in their wealth, bringing their total wealth to $80 billion.

The other day in the Washington Post there was an article talking about the Adelson primary. When we talk about a political primary, what it means is we have candidates in the Democratic Party and the Republican Party competing against each other to get the support of the people in their respective parties. Well, forget about that. That is old news. Now the goal is to appeal to one multibillionaire so this individual can contribute hundreds of millions of dollars into the campaign. This is what is going on right now in the Republican Party.

While the wealthiest are doing phenomenally well, while the United States today has the most unequal distribution of wealth and income of any major country on Earth, and while that income inequality is worse today than at any time since 1928, what we are also seeing is the collapse of the middle class and an increase in poverty.

Since 1999, the typical middle-class family has seen its income go down by more than $5,000 after adjusting for inflation. The typical middle-class American family earned less income last year than it did 25 years ago, back in 1989. The Presiding Officer is probably the last person in the world I have to explain this to, having written several books on this subject.

Why are people angry in this country? The median male worker in this country made $283 less last year than he did 44 years ago, and the typical female worker earned $1,700 less than in 2007.

The question I think every American should be asking is: How does it happen, when we have a huge increase in productivity—everybody has a cell phone, everybody has a sophisticated computer, we have robotics in all of our factories, we have a huge increase in productivity—where is all of the wealth going which increased productivity has created? The answer is pretty clear: It has gone to the top 1 percent.

So the moral issue we have to address as a nation is: Are we comfortable as a nation in which in recent years we have seen a huge increase in the number of millionaires and billionaires, while at the same time we have more people living in poverty than we have ever had before?

This is an incredible fact: As an aging nation with more and more people reaching retirement, half of the American people have less than $10,000 in their savings accounts and in many ways have no idea how they are going to retire with dignity. So the first issue we have to deal with is a moral issue. Are we comfortable living in a nation when so few have so much while so many have so little, and so many of our brothers and sisters—our fellow Americans—are struggling economically every single day?

Today we are addressing the issue of extending long-term unemployment benefits. There are millions of workers right now, including people who have worked their entire lives and who no longer can find a job. They have virtually no income coming in and are struggling to survive. Single moms are trying to raise families with very limited income. Is this the nation we are comfortable being?

I don't think we are. But it is not just an issue of individual income. Today, corporate profits are at an all-time high while wages are near an all-time low.

Then when we look at issues about how can we fund early childhood education, how can we make sure every American has health care as a right—how do we make sure that when people lose their jobs they are going to get the unemployment they need, we should remember that every single year corporations—large, multinational corporations—avoid paying at least $100 billion a year in taxes because they stash their cash in the Cayman Islands and other offshore tax havens. The result is one out of four American corporations pays nothing in Federal income taxes. In fact, over the last 5 years, huge companies, profitable companies, such as General Electric, Boeing, and Verizon, pay nothing—zero—in Federal income tax, even though all of those companies have made a combined profit of $78 billion since 2008.

Here is the irony of all ironies. It is one thing to understand that the very wealthy are becoming wealthier while everybody else is becoming poorer, but it is another thing to understand that the people who have the money, the billionaire class, are going to war against working Americans. If one has $80 billion, do they really need to invest in the political process so they can elect candidates who will give even more tax breaks? Do they really need to invest in rightwing candidates who are out there trying to cut Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Environmental Protection Agency, nutrition, food stamps, and education? Why, if somebody has $80 billion, are they working so hard for more tax breaks for themselves and for more cuts to the middle class and working class in terms of programs people desperately need?

Frankly, I think this is not an economic issue. I think it is a psychiatric issue. I think it is an issue which suggests people are simply power hungry. They need more and more. I think this is a very sad state of affairs.

The struggle we are engaged in now is stopping the billionaire class from cutting Social Security, from cutting Medicare, from cutting Medicaid, and from preventing us from creating the millions of jobs our economy desperately needs. But at the end of the day, what we are really talking about is whether this Nation is going to become an oligarchic form of society, and what that means, what an oligarchic form of society is about and which has existed in many countries throughout the world, historically—in many countries in Latin America, although that has recently changed—is a nation in which both the economics and politics of the nation are controlled by a handful of very wealthy, billionaire families. It doesn't matter what party is in power because the real power economically and politically rests with a billionaire class. It clearly seems that unless we act boldly to reverse this trend, we are seeing this country moving in exactly that direction.

One of the reasons is as a result of the disastrous Citizens United Supreme Court ruling, which regards corporations as people and allows the superwealthy to spend as much as they want on elections. The billionaire party, which is obviously aligned with the Republicans, is now, in fact, the major political force in this country. It is not the Republican party, per se. It is not the Democratic party, per se. It is the billionaire party led by people like the Koch brothers and Sheldon Adelson. They are the dominant political force in this country because they can spend unbelievable sums of money on elections. They can spend as much money

as they need, setting up think tanks and various organizations which will support their extreme rightwing point of view.

In the last presidential election Barack Obama's campaign spent a little bit over $1 billion. Mitt Romney spent somewhere around there, maybe a little bit less, but about $1 billion. The Koch brothers' wealth increased by $12 billion in one year.

Is there any reason to doubt that in the future this one family will be able to spend more money on a campaign than the presidential candidates themselves, receiving donations from hundreds of thousands of people? That is where we are today. Where we are today is that the very foundations of American democracy are being threatened by a handful of incredibly wealthy people who are saying: You know what. Eighty billion is not enough for me. Yeah, I made $12 billion more than last year—not enough for me. I have to have more, and I am going to get more tax cuts for myself, and in order to do that we may have to cut Social Security; we may have to cut Medicare; we may have to cut Medicaid; we may have to cut education for middle-class families.

We are in a debate about whether we raise the minimum wage. My view—and I know the Presiding Officer's view—is that we should raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour so that every working person in this country at least—at least—can have a minimal—minimal—standard of living. Many Americans don't know that it is not just that virtually all Republicans in the Congress are opposed to raising the minimum wage. The truth is many of them want to abolish the concept of the minimum wage.

The theory of the minimum wage is that nobody should work for below a certain wage. For many of my extreme conservative friends, they think it would be perfectly fine in a high unemployment area if we abolish the minimum wage. People today are working in this country for $3 and $4 an hour.

It is not only economics. Many of these billionaires are involved, as the Koch brothers are, in energy, in oil. What they want to do is abolish agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency so they can pollute more and more and more. The scientific community tells us in an almost unanimous fashion that climate change is real, climate change is made by human activity, climate change is already creating problems in our country and around the world, and that if we don't get our act together and significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions, the problems will only become worse. Yet you have families such as the Koch brothers and other energy-related billionaires spending huge sums of money trying to confuse people about the reality of climate change.

So to my mind the issue that we have to focus on as a Congress, the issue that we have to focus on as American people is: What kind of nation do we wish to live in? Do we want to live in a nation where a handful of billionaires own a significant amount of the wealth in this country while the middle class has less and less, where families cannot afford to send their kids to college or get decent childcare for their little ones, where people are reaching the age of 65 with virtually nothing in the bank in order to provide a dignified retirement? Is that the country we want to live in or do we want to see the middle class grow and have a more equitable distribution of wealth and income, a fairer tax system where the millionaires and billionaires and large corporations start paying their fair share of taxes.

From a political point of view, which is equally important: Do we want to have a nation in which the concept is one person, one vote; that we are all equal; that you have as much say about what happens in government as anybody else or do we want to have a political system where a handful of billionaires can sit around the room and say: OK, put $100 million into that State. Let's put $50 million into that State—where a handful of billionaires will determine who gets elected President, who gets elected Senator, who gets elected Governor, and have Members of Congress crawling up to these billionaires: What do you need, Mr. Billionaire? How do I get the hundreds of millions of dollars you can give me?

Is that really what American democracy is supposed to be about?

We have some very fundamental issues we have to address as a Congress. So I would suggest that we put on the agenda the issue of distribution of wealth and income and the implication of that grossly unfair distribution of wealth and income that we have right now.

With that, Mr. President, I would yield the floor, and note the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. WARREN. 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'S LOST HEROES

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, this is a difficult day for the city of Boston. Yesterday Boston lost two courageous firefighters who gave up their lives battling a terrible fire in the city's Back Bay.

When others flee, our firefighters rush headlong into danger, concerned only for the safety of others. They put their lives on the line every time. Today we mourn the loss of two brave men, two heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Lieutenant Ed Walsh and firefighter Mike Kennedy were highly respected and committed members of the Boston Fire Department who dedicated their lives to keeping our families safe. Firefighter Kennedy of Ladder Company 15 on Boylston Street was a member of the Boston Fire Department for 6½ years. He grew up in Roslindale, served our country as a U.S. Marine Corps combat veteran in Iraq, and was a first responder to the Boston Marathon attacks last year. He wanted to run in this year's marathon, so to be admitted he wrote an essay about his experiences responding to the marathon bombing. He had been at training for the big day, but he won't be running this year.

Lieutenant Walsh served on Engine 33, also based at the Boylston Street Fire Station. He was a firefighter in Boston for 9½ years and lived in West Roxbury with his wife Kristen and their three young kids. Lieutenant Walsh came from a firefighting family and followed in the footsteps of his father and his uncle, both of whom served on the Watertown Fire Department. He will be missed.

I know I speak on behalf of the city of Boston and the people of Boston when I say that all our thoughts and prayers are with Lieutenant Walsh's and Firefighter Kennedy's families at this very difficult time. Boston is deeply grateful to Lieutenant Walsh and to Firefighter Kennedy, and to all our policemen, firefighters, and first responders who put their lives at risk to protect our families every single day, and to all of our firefighter families who face the risk that a loved one will rush into a burning building and give up everything to keep all of us safe.

Thank you, Mr. President. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, every day firefighters and other first responders around our country put their lives on the line to protect the public. Yesterday members of the Boston Fire Department bravely entered a burning building in Boston's Back Bay in a selfless effort to save lives and keep the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts safe.

Firefighters head toward the danger as ordinary citizens run away from danger. They are a very special breed, these firefighters. It is with a very heavy heart that I come to the floor today, along with Senator WARREN, to honor two of these courageous men, Lieutenant Edward Walsh and firefighter Michael Kennedy, who became caught in the fire and heroically sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. Thirteen other firefighters were injured in the blaze and are expected to survive.

Firefighter Michael Kennedy was 33 years old. A native of the Roslindale

section of Boston, he lived in Hyde Park and had been with the Boston Fire Department for the past 6 years. A former marine, Michael was among the first responders who nobly and bravely served those injured in the Boston Marathon bombing almost 1 year ago.

Lieutenant Edward Walsh was 43 years old. He lived in West Roxbury with his wife and three children. Lieutenant Walsh came from a firefighting family. Both his father and uncle were fire lieutenants in nearby Watertown. He had been with the Boston Fire Department for 9½ years and was stationed at Engine 33, Ladder 15, just blocks from the building where the fire occurred.

Lieutenant Walsh and Firefighter Kennedy are American heroes. Their memories will live on forever as everlasting examples of the extraordinary courage and dedication that is at the very heart of the Boston Fire Department and in the hearts of firefighters everywhere. Boston is strong because of heroes such as Lieutenant Walsh and Firefighter Kennedy who place the safety of others before themselves.

In this nine-alarm fire, there were zero civilian casualties. These two brave men put their lives on the line so that others may go on living. I offer my condolences to the families of Lieutenant Walsh and Firefighter Kennedy and to the Boston Fire Department. Massachusetts has lost two of its finest sons, and I grieve along with the rest of the Commonwealth, along with Senator WARREN, and along with everyone else for the loss that has been suffered.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, George Holland was a pretty exceptional kid. When he was 14 years old, he went through something that I do not think any of us can even imagine what it is like to go through. His parents got into a heated argument. They were estranged at the time. It became so violent that it culminated in his mother fatally stabbing his father. He was 14 years old, and he lost his dad and then saw his mother get sent away to prison.

He then went to live with his aunt. His aunt attests to the fact that even in those dark days, he was full of a positive attitude. He refused to dwell on the murder, to use it as a crutch. He excelled.

His friends said his smile was infectious. He was always hugging everybody.

He played center on the high school football team in Providence, RI, which is where he is from. His coach says that he was a great team player, he was a leader, and he was always looking to take the younger kids under his wing. His coach said, ''He was just a great kid.''

Well, 3 years after his mother killed his father, George Holland died as well. A gunman targeted his house on February 4 of this year—a house he was visiting. He was with his girlfriend and her family when someone shot into the house around 9 p.m. A bullet went through the kitchen window and struck George, who collapsed and later died at Rhode Island Hospital. He was 17 years old.

Steve Finkbeiner and his wife Constance were beloved in their town of LaPlace, LA. They owned a feedstore that was at the end of a quiet road. They had owned it for 28 years. The community all looked upon the Finkbeiners as family. Everybody had some reason to go into that feedstore every now and again. Constance and Steve treated their customers as if they were members of their own immediate family.

One friend said exactly that: They were like family. They were just like family.

Others remembered Steve as a hardworking man and a community member.

It was just after 2:30 p.m. on February 25—just a few weeks ago—when deputies received a call from the feed and supply store. A woman said she and her husband had just been shot during an armed robbery. Constance survived the attack but was critically injured. Her husband Steve died. What happened was two robbers initially went into the store inquiring about shots for a pet. They left briefly only to return to rob the place and shoot the couple who owned the store.

Ruthanne Lodato lived just over the border in Alexandria, VA. She was a music teacher, 59 years old. She was as involved as one can be in the community. She was a loving wife to her husband and the mother of three daughters. She was planning her class's 40th reunion. She was remembered fondly as a music teacher who would hold up her hand to cue the group to sing her school's alma mater. She was the glue that held her family and friends together. That is how she was described.

There were 300 mourners at her funeral. On February 6 of this year—again, just over a month ago—she was shot after she opened the door to her suburban home for what was described as a balding, bearded man in a tan jacket, who shot her dead.

Ricky Roberts was a very exceptional guy. He lived out in Sonora, CA. He was a demolition derby driver, and he used his garage to construct demolition derby cars. That is what he loved to do. He loved it so much that when he got married to his wife Teddi, they were married on top of a derby car, probably one that he had made, in July of 1990. They were married on top one of his derby cars at the town's Mother Lode Fairgrounds.

What he also loved was volunteering for his community. Ricky was a longtime Sonora police volunteer and a member of the Christian Heights Church. He volunteered hours and hours every week as one of the citizen police officers, and he was very involved with the Police Explorers, helping to train and organize some of the kids who were involved in the Police Explorers Program.

He was a very positive person. His mom said that he made people feel good about themselves and that he had a great rapport with people. He had a great sense of humor and he had the ability to laugh at himself.

On February 16 of this year, Ricky was found at 11 a.m. bleeding in his garage—the garage where he built demolition derby cars—from an apparent gunshot. He was pronounced dead at the scene. He was the first homicide victim in Sonora, CA, in nearly 13 years.

The numbers are pretty stunning: 31,000 people every year die from gun violence; 2,600 people die every month, and 86 people die every day.

There is no other country in the industrialized world that has numbers that come anywhere close to approximating these catastrophic totals.

What I have tried to do is come down to the floor every week to tell the story of the voices of these victims to let my friends know that these are real people with real families who are getting killed at a rate of 86 per day all across the country. We can talk about these statistics, but apparently the statistics haven't moved Congress and the Senate to action. Maybe the voices of those 86 people a day will—even after they leave this place.

The carnage and the wreckage that is left behind is nearly incalculable. Surveys have been done of what it is like to live in cities with a high incidence of gun violence. They show that the rates of PTSD among the kids who have to live every day with the fear of being shot or with the knowledge that they are pretty sure that in that year a friend, a neighbor or a relative will be killed. They rival the rates of PTSD of our returning soldiers. These cities are like war zones.

The tragedy of all of this is that we are not powerless to do something about it. We have the ability to change laws, to modify laws, in order to reduce the rates of gun violence all across this country.

I close by drawing attention to the evidence. Johns Hopkins recently did a new study of a Missouri law that for years had required background checks before people bought guns and licenses for all handgun owners.

In 2007, Missouri repealed that law.

Johns Hopkins, one of the best research universities in the country, did an exhaustive study of rates of gun violence before that law was passed and the rates of gun violence afterwards.

They controlled for every factor other than this law that was repealed. They looked at whether rates of gun violence were increasing in only certain counties. They compared it to rates of gun violence in nearby States, and they looked at all of the other factors that could go into an explanation other than the repeal of the law when trying to figure out why rates of gun violence were increasing.

What they found was very simple. They found that even when we control for all of the other factors, the repeal of the background checks law in Missouri led to a 23-percent spike in firearm homicide rates. That is an additional 55 to 63 murders every year from 2008 to 2012.

There were 60 additional people killed in one State alone because that State had chosen to allow criminals to own guns. When we repeal a background check law, we essentially are allowing criminals to go into places where guns are sold, purchase them, and then either use them themselves or sell them in the black market to people who will do the kind of destruction that leads to 31,000 people dying every year.

My colleagues, we have the ability to change this situation. I try to make this point every time I come to the floor to talk about the voices of victims. I understand that we are not going to bring these numbers to zero by passing a commonsense background checks bill or by investing more money into our mental health system or by trying to do something, even if it is in a nonlegislative way, to address the culture of violence in our society. There is always going to be gun violence.

We can do something. We can lower these numbers. We can lessen the damage, the trauma, and the carnage all across our country, all across the States that we represent.

Think about a kid like George Holland, who had overcome so much, the death of one of his parents and the imprisonment of the other, to become an immensely compassionate 17-year-old. Who knew. Who knows what he was going to accomplish.

We will never get to understand the good that George Holland could have done in this world because, at age 17 on February 4 of this year, he was gunned down in his girlfriend's home.

Hopefully, whether it is the data or the voices of victims, the Senate will figure out that we can do something to change that reality.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order with respect to the motion to proceed to H.R. 3979 be modified so that when the postcloture time is expired the Senate proceed to a vote on the motion to proceed to the bill.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 4302

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks on Monday, March 31, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4302, which was received from the House and is at the desk; that there be no amendments or motions in order to the bill with the exception of budget points of order and the applicable motions to waive; that the time until 5 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees for debate on the bill; that notwithstanding the previous order, following the vote on confirmation of the Owens nomination on Monday, March 31, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 4302, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that the bill be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold; finally, that upon disposition of H.R. 4302, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3979, as provided under the previous order.

Madam President, I want everyone to understand there will be at least 3 hours of debate on H.R. 4302, and I want to make sure everyone understands I will be giving Senator WYDEN the 1½ hours on our side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the request is agreed to.

SGR

Mr. REID. Madam President, before Chairman BAUCUS became Ambassador to China, the Finance Committee, under his auspices, negotiated a bipartisan, bicameral bill with the House to repeal the flawed Medicare physician payment system. He worked on that for more than a year. But the committees didn't come to an agreement on the really hard part—how to pay for it.

Senator WYDEN, the new chairman of the Finance Committee, has come up with a way to pay for it. I support repealing the payment system—the SGR—permanently. I have been in favor of that for a long time, and I appreciate the work done on that in the past period of time Senator WYDEN has been chairman of that committee. I repeat, the work done on it for a year didn't have a way to pay for it. So I support repealing this permanently. I believe we should repeal it without pay-fors or by using reductions in the overseas contingency fund, called OCO.

The deadline is here. I spoke on the floor this morning, and I say it again. Everyone is saying, Well, why are you helping the doctors? Madam President, I am helping my Medicare recipients in Nevada. They need physicians. And for us to play around with this bill, as we do continually, isn't fair to the patients. Because doctors are unhappy that they do not have some degree of certainty, and that is what they need. So that is why I am for getting rid of this totally. We don't have that now.

The House passed a short time ago a patch of 12 or 13 months, which is good. So efforts will continue on the permanent repeal of the SGR, and I support Senator WYDEN seeing what he can do to come up with some votes for a permanent repeal. He served a long time in the House and a long time in the Senate and he knows what he is doing. So let us hope he gets enough votes. Until then, we are left with a patch.

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. KING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

REMEMBERING ED MUSKIE

Mr. KING. Madam President, I rise this afternoon to memorialize one of the great residents, citizens, denizens of this body—Senator Edmund Sixtus Muskie of Maine—who tomorrow, March 28, 2014, would have been 100 years old.

I knew Ed Muskie—not well, but I knew him. I knew him working here as a staff member. We were very scared of him. He was a presence. He was a force. He was indeed a great man. He is the classic American story—a classic American story we need to remind ourselves of.

He was the son of a Polish immigrant tailor in a small town called Rumford on the Androscoggin River in western Maine. He rose to become a great U.S. Senator, Secretary of State, candidate for President, candidate on the ballot for Vice President of the United States, and one of the great citizens of Maine and the country of the 20th century. Ed Muskie rose by his own merits.

I am convinced that the secret sauce of America is the welcoming of people from all over the world who come here to bring their talents and allowing them to express themselves fully and freely in the wonderful rich soil of this great country.

Ed Muskie went to school on a scholarship at a small college in Maine, Bates College, where the Muskie Archives currently reside. Then he went on to Cornell Law School through the generosity of individuals and scholarships because he had no resources of his own. He was in World War II and then came back to practice law in the small town of Waterville in Central Maine.

In 1954 Ed Muskie literally invented the Democratic Party in Maine. I don't believe there had been a major Democratic officeholder in Maine for some 50 years. I think perhaps there were a few in the 1920s and 1930s, but the State was completely dominated by the Republican Party all through the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.

When Ed Muskie ran for Governor in 1954, it was the longest of long shots. In fact, the story in Maine was that, of course, in the 1936 election, when

Franklin D. Roosevelt ran against Alf Landon, Roosevelt carried every State in the Union except two—Maine and Vermont. Hence the famous saying: As goes Maine, so goes Vermont.

The story goes that on the coast of Maine, in a small Republican town of several hundred people, the clerk announced the vote.

At the end of the tally, she said: Landon 47, Roosevelt 2.

Someone mumbled: The SOB voted twice.

That was the way the Republican Party dominated the State—until Ed Muskie in 1954. He drove from one end of the State to the other with friends, stayed on friends' living room couches—nothing fancy. The idea of a political ad on television in those days was to show up at the TV station at the appointed hour, and as the clock ticked to 8 you would look into the camera, give your statement for 30 seconds, and then you were off to the next campaign stop.

As the campaign went on in 1954, something happened in Maine: An excitement built—a buzz, I guess we would say today. Ed Muskie—indeed, to everyone's shock and surprise—was elected Governor in that year. In those days, the Maine Governor's term was 2 years. He was reelected in 1956—a very successful Governor—and then was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1958.

There is a wonderful story about when Muskie first came to the Senate. Lyndon Johnson, of course, was the dynamic, I would say all-powerful majority leader of the Senate at the time. The story is that Johnson took Muskie aside and said: Now, Ed, when somebody comes and asks you for your vote, you just tell them you haven't made up your mind yet. Your vote is the most valuable thing you have in the U.S. Senate, and keep it to yourself. And if they press you, just say, ''Senator, they haven't gotten to the M's yet. When they do, you will know how I am going to vote.''

This was Johnson's advice to the freshman Senator from Maine.

A few weeks later, apparently there was some kind of procedural vote on the floor, and Johnson wanted to line up his votes in his Democratic caucus.

He went to Ed Muskie and said: Ed, can I count on your support?

Allegedly, Muskie replied: Senator, they haven't gotten to the M's yet.

The result was that Muskie was exiled to the Public Works Committee—at the time one of the least desirable of committee assignments. Of course, now it is the Environment & Public Works Committee and one of the most important and prestigious of our committees. But at the time it was the same as being sent to the outer limits by the majority leader, who didn't like this smart aleck from Maine.

But I think this story has an important and instructive ending because Ed Muskie, with his Maine work ethic, his common sense, and his intuition and insight, used the Public Works Committee to invent environmental law in America.

In 1970, 12 years later, the passage of the Clean Air Act was the first major passage of an environmental piece of legislation in American history. There had been a few small things here and there, but most States had very little in the way of environmental regulation and certainly there was no national regulation. But the amazing thing, the astonishing thing about the passage of the Clean Air Act—and it was a very important piece of legislation. It was very significant. It affected every business in the country. It affected the automobile industry. It affected the paper and manufacturing industry. It was a tremendously important piece of legislation and very controversial. But the Clean Air Act passed the Senate unanimously. Imagine. We can't pass the time of day unanimously, and he marshaled the resources, the votes, and the sentiment of the entire Senate. He did it through amazingly hard work. They had hundreds of hearings and hundreds of hours of markup. He listened to his colleagues, he found compromises, and he found ways to make it work across the entire spectrum of the Senate.

There were plenty of conservative Senators here in 1970. In fact, at one point in the debate on the Clean Air Act, Howard Baker, who was the Republican leader, gave his proxy to Muskie because he had to be out of the Chamber for a few hours. Again, imagine today the Republican leader giving his proxy to one of the Democratic Senators on a major piece of legislation. I think it says something about, unfortunately, the difference between then and now in the Senate, but it also says something about Muskie's leadership. It was made up in part of incredibly high intelligence. People who knew him well, such as Senator George Mitchell, have said he was one of the most brilliant people they have ever met. So he had high intelligence, but he also had high emotional intelligence. He could intuit what people needed, what they needed and wanted, and what they had to hear and how to persuade them. But he also had incredible perseverance and patience, and he was willing to listen and understand other people's point of view.

The Clean Air Act and later the Clean Water Act in 1972 are really the pillars of environmental law in this entire country. It is hard for us to realize today because we take for granted our commitment to environmental protection, but it didn't really exist until Ed Muskie's leadership in the late 1960s.

It is all the more remarkable for me as a political representative of the State of Maine that Muskie took this step because it had a significant impact on our major industry. Maine is a pulp and paper State, with huge mills and outpourings into the water and into the air. At the time, they were virtually untreated.

So this was not an insignificant act from Muskie's own political situation. It wasn't as though he had a free ride on this, but I believe part of the impetus for this great action, for this great insight was Muskie's being raised as a young boy in the town of Rumford on the Androscoggin River. The Androscoggin River at one point was one of the most polluted rivers in America. I live on the Androscoggin today. When Muskie was a boy, the saying was that the river was too thick to drink and too thin to plow. It was a terrible situation. Ed Muskie realized that, and he realized he had to do something about it. So he used the vehicle of the Public Works Committee, where he had been sent in exile, to achieve one of the great legislative monuments of the 20th century.

He also is the father of our current budget process. He was one of the Senators who put together the budget process in the mid to late 1970s. He had an incredibly distinguished career. He was an incredible force and a very powerful man.

I have a vivid personal recollection of him which to this day I don't quite know what to make of, but it is an absolutely true one. In 1968 he was running for Vice President of the United States. Ed Muskie was Hubert Humphrey's running mate. In the latter stages of the campaign—September, October of that year, 1968—it was the last several weeks of the campaign, and it was a time when Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates flew around the country. They didn't even take the time to have a motorcade and go into town to make a speech. The plane would land, the crowd would be right out on the airport runway, there would be a little fence line, and the candidate would come down the stairs, make a speech, and get back on the plane and go.

I was a law student that year at the University of Virginia, and I had no connection to Maine at the time, but I somehow heard that Ed Muskie, the Vice Presidential candidate, was coming to Richmond, VA, and was going to be at the airport at 8 or whatever on Tuesday night. So a bunch of us went over to Richmond to hear him. I can remember standing in this crowd along a fence line with probably 300 or 400 people and listening to Muskie right before the election in 1968. He spoke passionately about his vision for America. He spoke about what this country can and should mean. And this was a very important election. This was Richard Nixon versus Hubert Humphrey, and it was an election decided by one vote per precinct across the country—it was that close. It was a very close election.

Here is my strange memory, which again I say I don't really fully understand. I remember standing in the crowd listening to Muskie speak—whom I didn't know at all. I had never set foot in Maine at that point. I didn't know him. I hadn't met him. But I was listening to him speak. And at the end of his speech, out of my mouth completely spontaneously came the words

''We trust you.'' It was something about the man that made you feel you could trust him. He was so honest, so authentic, and so entirely himself. It was an amazing moment.

Here it is almost 50 years later, and I remember that evening in Richmond, VA, my first encounter with Ed Muskie.

I got to know him somewhat more when I worked here as a staff member for his colleague Bill Hathaway, the other Senator from Maine at that time. Then I had the privilege of interviewing him in my capacity as a public television host for a documentary in 1981, when he retired as Secretary of State.

He had a distinguished career here in the Senate. Then he went on and heeded Jimmy Carter's call in 1980 to serve as Secretary of State during the height of the Iran hostage crisis. He served our country honorably and well during that period and then retired. But when he retired, he didn't stop his involvement in public affairs. He became a champion of access to the legal system for the poor. He, of course, remained committed to the environment and had a very active life—mostly in Maine, in his beloved house in Kennebunkport—and was a contributor right up to his death in 1996.

Ed Muskie is a true American hero. There is no way my poor words or anybody else's can really capture his career and the impact he made. I think perhaps the closest I could come is to recall Sir Christopher Wren's epitaph on his tomb in St. Paul's Cathedral. On the tomb it says, ''If you seek his monument, look around you.'' If you would see Ed Muskie's memorial, look around you. Take a deep breath. Experience our great rivers. Experience the environment we now have in this country which we treasure and which is so much a part of who we are across the country and in, of course, the State of Maine. Ed Muskie was a great man. He was a great member of this body and it is an honor for me—to say it is an honor is a gross understatement—to be standing today in his seat, the seat that he held for those important years from 1958 to 1980 and when he served our country so, so well. Ed Muskie is a man who belongs to the ages, who we all miss, and who made such a difference in all of our lives.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

JUSTICE FOR ALL REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2013

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I urge Members from both sides of the aisle to come together and support passage of the Justice for All Reauthorization Act of 2013, an important and bipartisan bill that will improve the effectiveness of our criminal justice system. This legislation was voted unanimously out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on October 31, 2013. It is fitting that the full Senate is considering this legislation now, ahead of Crime Victims' Rights Week.

This important legislation, which is cosponsored by Senator JOHN CORNYN of Texas, reauthorizes the original Justice for All Act of 2004. That landmark law took significant steps to improve the quality of justice in this country by increasing the resources devoted to DNA analysis and other forensic science technology, establishing safeguards to prevent wrongful convictions, and enhancing protections for crime victims. The programs created by the Justice for All Act have had an enormous impact, and it is crucial that we reauthorize them.

We must do more than just reauthorize these vital programs, however.

The legislation before us strengthens key rights for crime victims, reauthorizes the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program, includes provisions to improve the quality of indigent defense, and increases access to post-conviction DNA testing to protect the innocent. It also includes new measures to help ensure the effective administration of criminal justice in the States.

The reauthorization strengthens the Kirk Bloodsworth Post Conviction DNA Testing Grant Program. Kirk Bloodsworth was a young man just out of the marines when he was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to death for a heinous crime that he did not commit. He was the first person in the United States to be exonerated from a death row crime through the use of DNA evidence.

The Kirk Bloodsworth Post Conviction DNA Testing Grant Program provides grants to States for testing in cases like Mr. Bloodsworth's—when someone has been convicted but significant DNA evidence was not tested. The reauthorization clarifies the conditions set for this program, so that participating States are required to preserve key evidence, and are given further guidance that will make the program more effective and allow more States to participate.

The Justice for All Reauthorization Act of 2013 also takes important steps to ensure that all criminal defendants, including those who cannot afford a lawyer, receive effective representation. It requires the Department of Justice to assist States in developing an effective and efficient system of indigent defense, and it calls on the States to produce comprehensive plans for their criminal justice systems. I know from my time as a prosecutor that the justice system only works as it should when each side is well represented by competent and well-trained counsel. The principle that all sides deserve zealous and effective counsel is at the bedrock of our constitutional system, and I am glad the legislation before us today embodies this belief.

The bill reauthorizes and improves key grant programs in a variety of areas throughout the criminal justice system. Importantly, it increases authorized funding for the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant program, which is a vital program to assist forensic laboratories in performing the many forensic tests that are essential to solving crimes and prosecuting those who commit those crimes.

It is also important to note that this bill would make all of these improvements while responsibly reducing the total authorized funding under the Justice for All Act. These changes will help States, communities, and the Federal government save money in the long term.

I thank the many law enforcement and criminal justice organizations that have helped to pinpoint the needed improvements that this bill will provide and I appreciate their ongoing support. I also thank Senators COONS, UDALL of New Mexico, MCCONNELL, KLOBUCHAR, FRANKEN, PORTMAN, FEINSTEIN, HATCH, SCHUMER, LANDRIEU, BURR, COLLINS, and MERKLEY for cosponsoring this critical legislation, and I thank the lead Republican cosponsor Senator CORNYN for working with me on this and on broader legislation to improve the use of forensic evidence in criminal cases.

Together we will continue to work toward a criminal justice system in which the innocent remain free, the guilty are punished, and all sides have the tools, resources, and knowledge they need to advance the cause of justice. Our criminal justice system is not perfect and we are all less safe when the system gets it wrong. Americans need and deserve a criminal justice system that keeps us safe, ensures fairness and accuracy, and fulfills the promise of our Constitution. The Justice for All Reauthorization Act will take important steps to bring us closer to that goal.

DISAPPEARANCE OF SOMBATH SOMPHONE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today to express my concern with the lack of progress in the case of Sombath Somphone, who has been missing in Laos since December 2012. Mr. Somphone disappeared while working on civil society development, and despite repeated calls by the U.S. government for a transparent investigation

and Mr. Somphone's safe return to his family, his disappearance is still unexplained.

A respected member of the development community, Mr. Somphone has lived and worked for many years in Laos and his efforts to strengthen Laotian civil society are well documented. The circumstances of his disappearance are mysterious, and, given his high profile, more than troubling. Furthermore, the lack of effort on the part of the Laotian government to investigate what has been described by many international observers as a forced disappearance is deeply disappointing.

Mr. Somphone's courageous work on behalf of political freedom and the protection of human rights in Laos is admirable, and he and others who engage in such pursuits should not fear for their safety, especially at the hands of a government. Despite repeated offers of international assistance and numerous inquiries about Mr. Somphone's welfare, the Laotian government appears satisfied despite having made no progress on the case.

I call on Laotian authorities to recognize the importance this has for Members of Congress and the American people, and people around the world, and to take all actions necessary to enable Mr. Somphone to return home to his family.

TRIBUTE TO RAY ALLEN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have spoken many times on the Senate floor about Vermont's dedicated farming families. Today, I would like to recognize the contributions of a great Vermont farmer, at a time of transition, Ray Allen of Allenholm Farm in South Hero, VT.

Ray has, since 1990, represented the University of Vermont as a delegate to the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching, CARET. The APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization representing 235 universities and public land grant institutions nationwide, and CARET advocates for greater national support and understanding of the land-grant university system's food and agricultural research, extension, and teaching programs that enhance the quality of life for all people.

Ray is the longest serving delegate nationally to the CARET and has made many significant contributions to the university extension component of the land grant mission. It is fitting, and should surprise no one that this seventh generation Vermont farmer has so truly served the land grant mission, considering that Ray's ancestors began farming in South Hero, VT in 1870, at about the same time that Vermont Senator Justin Morrill gained passage of his legislation creating the Land Grant College system.

Allenholm Farm is the oldest continuously operating apple orchard in the State of Vermont, and over the years has grown to be a mainstay of our regional and State agricultural economy.

In 1870, Ray Allen's great-grandfather purchased the current farm, marking the beginning of a family farming tradition on lovely Grand Isle, VT. Today, Ray and his wife Pam run the Allenholm Farm with the help of their children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren.

The chain of islands running up the center of Lake Champlain was once home to more than 100 commercial apple orchards. Today there are fewer, but the Allen's have thrived through creativity. They have diversified the farm to include many new apple varieties, and they now produce and retail their own cider, ice cider, hard cider, applesauce, and more than 3,000 apple pies every year.

Making great use of their location, which is within sight of New York and a few miles from the Canadian border, Ray and Pam have made the Allenholm Farm an international destination. Visitors can rent bicycles, stay the night at the Bed & Breakfast overlooking the orchards, buy maple syrup and maple creemies, and visit their petting zoo to meet Willie and Sassafrass, the famous kissing donkeys.

The Allenholm Farm AppleFest attracts up to 25,000 visitors annually and has yielded a bountiful harvest for the entire local economy of the Champlain islands.

Vermont's agricultural economy is thriving today as more and more of farmers follow Ray and Pam's formula: Focus on superb quality, create value-added products, build the Vermont brand, provide local food to local markets, and have fun doing it. For many visitors, Ray and Pam Allen are the face of farming.

As Vermont's agricultural leaders are inclined to do, Ray has taken on many leadership roles in his local community, as well at the State and National level, all in addition to his decades of service to the Association of Public Land Grant Universities. He has served as town auditor, justice of the peace, a member of the school board and has been chief of the rescue squad since its inception in 1973. Ray's contributions to his alma mater, the University of Vermont, are too numerous to list completely here, but they include current or past membership on the boards of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, UVM Extension, and the Alumni Council. Ray's feats as a student track star are still the subject of legend now, 50 years later, and two annual track trophies bear his name.

As a strong supporter of the land grant mission, I thank Ray Allen for his service to the Association of Public Land Grant Universities as a delegate to the Council of Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching. I am certain that Ray will be missed in this role but that he will continue to build on this record of accomplishment and public service in many other venues and that the seventh generation Allenholm Farm will continue to thrive under his leadership.

Marcelle and I think of Ray and Pam as very special friends and cherished Vermonters.

RECOGNIZING SUNDY BEST

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize an exceptionally talented country music duo from my home State of Kentucky. Kris Bentley and Nick Jamerson have vaulted their band, Sundy Best, from the small bars and music halls of eastern Kentucky into the national spotlight. The story of their rise is remarkable, and one that is far from its conclusion.

Nick and Kris first met in elementary school in Prestonsburg, KY, where they both grew up in music-loving families. The two started a band together in high school but parted ways when Nick went to play football at Pikeville College and Kris enrolled in Centre College, where he played basketball. Nick's passion for music never subsided, though, and after college he contacted Kris to inquire about purchasing a drum set. As it happened, Kris's passion for music remained as well—he didn't have a set to sell, but he would gladly come play with his old buddy Nick. The two friends picked up right where they left off, and the very next night they were playing their first gig together.

The band's big break came in November of 2010. Nick had just moved to Lexington with Kris, and the two landed a gig at Redmon's, a classic Lexington live music establishment. Previously the two had played just as ''Nick and Kris,'' but for a venue like Redmon's they needed a name that they could promote. The two settled on one that reflected their musical roots in Sunday church services. As Kris tells it, ''It was originally going to be Sunday's Best but then we said, 'No, Sundy Best.' '' The duo dropped the ''a'' from Sunday because, ''That's the way we talk.''

The show at Redmon's was an enormous success, so much so that they began to play a regular gig there. This consistent venue for their music was instrumental in establishing the band's fan base and name recognition. Kris acknowledges that this was when ''people started taking us seriously . . . because that's a premier music venue.''

Things have been looking up for Sundy Best ever since. In 2013 they re-released their first album, Door Without a Screen, and watched it climb into the iTunes Top 10. The video for the hit song from the album, ''Home (I Wanna Go),'' helped drive the album's success and is a fixture on Country Music Television.

As a fellow Kentuckian, I am proud of the success seen by Sundy Best. Nick and Kris are not only talented musicians, but they are also outstanding ambassadors for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Although their

music is spreading further across the country each day, their roots remain grounded in eastern Kentucky.

I ask that my Senate colleagues join me in recognizing the success of Sundy Best and wishing them well with the recent release of their new album, Bring Up the Sun.

Kentucky Monthly recently published an article chronicling the rise of Sundy Best. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

[From Kentucky Monthly, Feb. 25, 2014]

THE BEST MEN WIN

(By Tricia Despres)

When kids grow up with something to prove, they can become stubborn and a bit hardheaded. But when those kids grow up to be adults who want to make a living as musicians . . . well, they just might become superstars.

So goes the story of Sundy Best.

Blending an eclectic mix of acoustic guitar with the beat of the cajón drum and the compelling vocals of Nick Jamerson and Kris Bentley, Sundy Best looks as if they are about to embark on a career many others are often left to dream about. Just last year, the Kentucky-based duo released a deluxe version of their album Door Without a Screen and watched as it landed in the Top 10 on iTunes. The video for their single ''Home (I Wanna Go)'' reached the top of CMT Pure's fan-voted poll for multiple weeks. A brand-new album in 2014 is sure to help the duo prove to the rest of the world that, sometimes, the underdogs win.

''Growing up, I always seemed to have a chip on my shoulder,'' says Jamerson. ''As a kid who loved playing sports, I was smaller than anyone else, so I always had something to prove in everything that I did. It was the attitude I would ultimately have with everything in my life. I was just always super competitive.''

It was an attitude Jamerson seemed to inherit from his close-knit family. ''Three of my grandparents had a college degree, which, coming from a small mining town in Kentucky, was not at all common,'' he recalls. ''I mean, my grandmother could build anything. Being around those kinds of people all my life and seeing how driven and successful they were . . . it definitely made an impression on me.''

As a 5-foot-10 kid basketball player from Prestonsburg, Bentley also was up against his share of obstacles, none of which he hadn't learned to conquer during his childhood years growing up within the sacred walls of the church, hence the name Sundy Best. ''I would play drums every Sunday with my dad and brother,'' recalls Bentley, describing himself as a good kid who ''put Mom through the wringer . . . church really was the only outlet to get out there and do music, especially in eastern Kentucky.''

Besides sports and a childhood spent within the church, the two also shared a musical foundation formed within their homes, often spending countless hours listening to a diverse mix of rock, pop, and bluegrass. ''Everyone would get together at my grandparents' house and play the old bluegrass standards,'' recalls Jamerson. ''The doctor up the road would come over and play the fiddle, Grandpa played the banjo, Grandma played guitar, and my great-aunt played the mandolin.''

First meeting in elementary school, Jamerson and Bentley would go on to form a firm foundation of friendship through their teenage years, which continues to benefit them to this day. ''When you know someone as long as we have, you know each other's dynamics,'' says Jamerson. ''He is like a brother to me. It's gratifying to do this whole music thing alongside someone you have known for so long.''

After high school, the pair's goal to play sports often competed with the draw they shared to ultimately pursue a music career. ''Music was the one passion that I always had, but looking back, I am glad my parents talked me into getting a college degree,'' says Jamerson, who was on the Pikeville College football team. ''The people I met and the experiences I had in college made me the person I am now. That's where songs come from. You need perspective and life lessons as a writer.''

The end of college (Bentley attended and played basketball for Centre) brought the beginning of the duo's quick, yet organic, ascent to musical success. After their joint move to Lexington and a brief stint working at the local cable company, the two began performing at patio parties, restaurants and clubs, often playing four-hour sets each night. A regular gig at Lexington's Redmon's helped the two establish a growing fan base eager to find out more about the band.

''Thank goodness for social media,'' says Bentley, who cut his musical teeth trying to emulate the songs of artists such as Bob Seger and Tom Petty. ''Good ol' Facebook was the only way to connect to our fans and tell them where we were going to be every night. We would always have 20 or 30 people from eastern Kentucky who knew us from when we played sports drive up on a weeknight to see us perform. Seeing that kind of support when we were just out there playing cover songs was a huge boost to our confidence.''

Then, Sundy Best recorded the song that would change their career: ''Home (I Wanna Go).'' ''That song took off right around the same time when the winter had set in and the patio gigs had shut down,'' recalls Bentley. ''Once people heard that song, the whole thing just grew. People knew we were serious about doing music.''

In 2012, the duo recorded some of their songs that they self-produced with friend and filmmaker Coleman Saunders, and independently released Door Without a Screen.

Last year, they were asked to play the jewel of all venues: the Grand Ole Opry. ''As a musician and performer, I don't think I will ever be the same,'' says Jamerson. ''I cried when I found out we were playing there. It was like being at church and feeling something on your heart and you don't know what it is. We had been touring all year, so sharing it with our families was an unbelievable feeling. I mean, what else could top that? I was watching Netflix the other night and they were doing a two-day concert special on Neil Young and were showing this concert he did at the Ryman Auditorium, and I mean, he was walking through the same doors we did when we were playing there for the Grand Ole Opry. Every time we get the chance to play there, it ends up being quite the spiritual experience.''

The year 2014 brings Sundy Best fans the much-anticipated new album Bring Up the Sun, a collection of songs that just might take their longtime fans a bit by surprise. ''Our first album was quite Kentucky-centric,'' says Jamerson, who spends any spare time he has at home in Lexington with his two dogs and cat. ''The music just feels good in our bones. It's a really broad album, which everyone we work with has a hard time explaining. But everyone will find something different in it. It's good music, but it's coming from a bit of a different angle now, so I suppose people are going to be surprised. Some people want every record to sound the same, but once your fans think they know you, you are done. You won't grow as musicians if they think they have you figured out.''

''We definitely have a vision of where we want to be,'' says Bentley, who with Jamerson played more than 190 dates out on the road in 2013. ''I would never have expected to be where we are today just one year ago. I think 2014 is going to be another growth year for us. A lot of people still don't know who we are, so we want to definitely continue to play new markets. We are excited to see what happens with this new record and then determine what happens next.''

No matter where their musical journey might still yet lead them, one thing is for sure: These two will continue to give credit where credit is due.

''You hear people all the time talking about how they are Texas proud or Georgia proud or even Tennessee proud,'' says Bentley. ''When you are from eastern Kentucky, you are automatically proud. You can be anywhere in the world, and if you meet someone from eastern Kentucky, you are immediately friends. Plus, they are the craziest fans ever. We love Nashville and all, but we would just rather stay right here in Kentucky. The people here have been the biggest driving factor in our career, and we can never be too thankful.''

''Before I moved to Lexington, my whole life had been spent living in eastern Kentucky. I had never had a chance to miss living in the country. And as we have begun touring more, I now know it was something I myself took for granted,'' says Jamerson. ''We love Kentucky and will always want to carry that flag . . . but we can't wait to spread the word to everyone else, too.''

SYRIAN WAR CRIME TRIBUNAL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Senators RUBIO, MURPHY, KAINE, and I recently introduced in the Senate a concurrent resolution on the need for the investigation and prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide committed by any groups involved in civil war in Syria. Congressman CHRIS SMITH has introduced the House version of this concurrent resolution. It calls for President Obama to have our Ambassador to the U.N. use the influence and vote of the United States to promote the establishment of a Syrian war crimes tribunal. The need is stark. Quite simply, the terrible crimes being committed in the civil war in Syria call out for justice. As such, the U.N. should establish a tribunal similar to the ones created in response to the charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in the former Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda.

As the Syrian conflict entered its fourth year this month, the horrific violence there continues unabated. The losses from the conflict are staggering. According to some estimates the death toll has reached more than 146,000. There are an estimated 6.5 million internally displaced persons in Syria and millions of Syrian refugees have fled their country.

Last week I had the privilege of meeting with a number of dedicated

Chicago-area members of the Syrian-American Medical Society who recently returned from a medical mission to treat Syrian patients in the north of Lebanon. They shared heartbreaking stories of the Syrian refugees they met and treated and appealed for continued international help for these millions of innocent victims. As a hearing I chaired in January on Syrian refugees illustrated, this humanitarian catastrophe has created grave challenges for neighboring countries that are hosting the vast majority of the refugees. Additionally, the fighting in Syria is inflaming sectarian violence in neighbors such as Iraq and Lebanon.

A staggering 9.3 million Syrians inside the country are estimated to be in need of assistance due to the conflict, and even more barbaric, starvation is being used as a weapon of war, with an estimated 220,000 people trapped in besieged areas in Syria. The Assad regime and, to a far lesser extent, some opposition groups have blocked humanitarian assistance in a deliberate effort to increase pressure on besieged civilians. If the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime wasn't horrific enough, it has also utilized so-called barrel bombs, mixes of explosives and shrapnel stuffed into barrels, that helicopter gunships drop in civilian areas controlled by the opposition such as Aleppo.

The Syrian conflict has devastated even the most innocent members of Syrian society. I was deeply moved by the plight of the children when last year I visited Kilis, a Syrian refugee camp in Turkey. Yet sadly their plight continues. In January the U.N. issued a report which estimated that more than 10,000 children have been killed. UNICEF said in March that the real number is likely to be even higher. The January U.N. report stated that children in Syria experienced suffering which was ''unspeakable.'' Some of the reports of terrible abuses include sexual violence against children held in Syrian Government detention as well as minors being used in combat and as human shields. In addition, UNICEF released a report in March that estimated there are up to 1 million children who live under siege and in hard-to-reach areas that UNICEF and its humanitarian partners cannot access on a regular basis.

As my colleague Senator MCCAIN mentioned in his remarks in February on the Senate floor, respected former war crimes prosecutors issued a report in January based on evidence they obtained regarding torture and murder by the Syrian regime. The report stated that the evidence—largely provided by a Syrian defector and which includes 55,000 photographic images of approximately 11,000 detained persons who had been tortured and killed by the Syrian regime—was credible. Additionally, these war crimes prosecutors noted that such evidence could support findings of war crimes as well as crimes against humanity against the Assad regime.

In 2011, I was joined by Senators BOXER, CARDIN, and MENENDEZ on a letter to then-U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice urging that Assad be referred by the Security Council to the International Criminal Court. Now, 2½ years later, with so many further atrocities in Syria, the need for holding those accountable for war crimes is as strong as ever. We, and other concerned countries, have an interest in seeing justice served. Those who commit war crimes and crimes against humanity must be put on notice that the international community will strive to hold them accountable for their unlawful acts.

Unfortunately, establishing a Syrian war crimes tribunal may face opposition from other members of the U.N. Security Council, most notably Russia. Particularly given the widespread condemnation of Russia illegally violating the territorial integrity of another state, it seems that Russian President Putin does not care about the laws or views of the international community. The hypocrisy of Putin stating that other countries should not intervene in Syria where there is an undisputed humanitarian catastrophe, while he illegally annexes the territory of another state, in part on false humanitarian ground, is staggering.

Nevertheless, if Putin wants to block establishing a Syrian war crimes tribunal, let us have Russia go on the record to say why it opposes justice for those who have suffered so much in Syria. Let them explain how Russia, having suffered its own horrific siege of Leningrad during which 800,000 people—one-third of the city's population—died of starvation during the almost 900-day siege by the Nazis, continues to support the same brutal starvation techniques of its client autocrat in Syria, Bashar al-Assad. With these types of brazen actions and statements, Putin will never earn the global respect and credibility he so desperately demands by invading neighboring countries, while at the same time continuing to support and arm butchers such as Assad.

In February the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution, which Russia finally supported, demanding greater humanitarian access as well as calling on all parties to immediately cease attacks against civilians and lift the siege of populated areas. Yet 1 month after the Security Council ordered all parties in Syria to allow aid workers into besieged areas and stop indiscriminate attacks on civilians, a soon-to-be-released U.N. report says that the Syrian Government has essentially ignored the Security Council. Food supplies have been held up at government checkpoints, medical supplies removed from aid convoys, visas stalled for U.N. officials, and key supply routes cynically kept closed. And Assad's forces persist in using brutal barrel bombs, causing horrific indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians. The international community should not let this obstruction stand and must enforce the Security Council resolution.

Ultimately, as President Obama has stated, this conflict needs to be resolved politically. Last year, I did support the limited use of military force when Assad broke a long-established global taboo against the use of chemical weapons but also agree that a political solution must ultimately be pursued in Syria. But for a long-term and stable political solution to the war there must also be justice for those who have suffered so much, and a Syrian war crimes tribunal would play a vital role in such a process.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR OBJECTION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I intend to object to any unanimous consent request at the present time relating to the nomination of Carolyn Hessler Radelet to be the Director of the Peace Corps.

I will object because I am inquiring into the circumstances related to the refusal of the Peace Corps to grant the Peace Corps inspector general full and timely access to records to which the inspector general is entitled under the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 and the Inspector General Act of 1978.

At a hearing before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform convened on January 15, 2014, Peace Corps inspector general Kathy Buller detailed difficulties she has encountered in accessing records which she deemed were directly relevant to her review of Peace Corps' handling of reports from its volunteers who claim that they have been sexually assaulted.

According to Inspector General Buller's testimony, records were withheld based on reasoning that directly contravenes the Kate Puzey Act and the Inspector General Act.

In addition, Inspector General Buller testified that even when limited access to records was later granted, most of the relevant information was withheld under an overbroad interpretation of what constitutes ''personally identifying information'' under 22 U.S.C. §2507a(f)(1)–(2). Inspector General Buller did clarify that, following objections from Congress, Peace Corps narrowed its interpretation of ''personally identifying information'' which allowed her to access slightly more information relating to the subject sexual assaults but not everything to which the inspector general is entitled.

In order to exercise the oversight function envisioned by the Kate Puzey Act and the Inspector General Act, it is critical for the Peace Corps inspector general to have full and timely access to all Peace Corps records which she deems relevant to her review.

The Peace Corps apparently withheld records from the inspector general during the nominee's tenure as the Acting Director, and I would like the opportunity to understand the circumstances more fully.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SFC OLLEN HUNT

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to SFC retired Ollen Hunt for his exceptional dedication to duty and service to the U.S. Army and to the United States of America.

A native of McLemoresville, TN, Sergeant Hunt was drafted into the U.S. Army in November of 1942. Sergeant Hunt was a part of the 92nd Infantry Division, which was also known as ''The Buffalo Division.'' Sergeant Hunt and his unit boarded troop ships at Camp Henry, VA, and survived the sea journey to their destination in Italy. The 92nd fought with distinction and divisiveness, and contributed to the eventual defeat of the Axis Powers.

After returning from his deployment, Sergeant Hunt returned home for a short time before returning to assignments throughout Europe. He was responsible for the food and logistics operations at various military installations. He continued his military service until retiring as a Sergeant First Class in 1963. A year after retirement, Sergeant Hunt accepted a position as a flight kitchen chef in Anchorage, AK. Sergeant Hunt and his wife Hanna owned many small businesses, including the Hof Brau and Sandwich Deck. He also served on several downtown merchant and municipal committees and councils, receiving numerous awards for his contributions to the Anchorage community. After his ''second retirement'', Sergeant Hunt worked with the Veterans Administration's Oral History project writers to create an autobiography of his life. His work formed what would later become his book Buffalo Soldier: What I Did for My Country, What My Country Did for Me.

Sergeant Hunt's leadership throughout his career has positively influenced his peers and superiors, soldiers, and civilians alike. As a hardworking and friendly man, he will be greatly missed by his family and those fortunate enough to have known him.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I join my colleagues today in recognizing and commending SFC Ollen Hunt for his service to his country in the United States Army. We wish his wife, Hannelore, and their two children, Katherine and Ollen, all the best as they celebrate the life of this great man.•

REMEMBERING CLAUS-M. NASKE

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President. Dr. Claus-M. Naske, a giant in the field of history in Alaska, passed away on March 5, 2014. I would like to honor him and his accomplishments as an educator, historian and family man.

Claus emigrated to Alaska in 1954 and moved to Fairbanks in 1957 to attend the University of Alaska Fairbanks, graduating with double majors in political science and history. He obtained his doctorate from Washington State University and joined the University of Alaska Fairbanks faculty in 1969, starting his long and illustrious career as a teacher, mentor, researcher, author and administrator.

Claus was a professor of history at the University of Alaska Fairbanks until 2001. He not only taught, researched and wrote, he was the director of the University of Alaska Press until 2004. Managing the university's press office added to Dr. Naske's workload, but it was evidence of his love for scholarly work.

Claus authored and co-authored over a dozen books, including ones on two prominent political Alaskan political figures, Bob Bartlett and Ernest Gruening and several on Alaska's history. His book Alaska: A History, in its third edition, is considered the preeminent record of our great State. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Claus for his dedication and persistence as a historian, one who will long be remembered.

Claus received many well-deserved awards throughout his life, including the 2012 Distinguished Alumnus Award, the 2001 Usibelli Award for Research, the 1997 Alumni Award for Professional Excellence, and the 1995 Award of Merit by the Western History Association—to name a few.

Claus married Dinah in 1960 and had two children: Natalia-Michelle Nangeak and Nathaniel-Michael Noah. He and his wife have been generous to UAF, establishing a history scholarship and making regular donations to the campus public radio station.

Claus-M. Naske will go down in history with a sterling reputation as a scholar, teacher and father.•

TRIBUTE TO SAMUEL B. OLDEN

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to advise the Senate of the accomplishments of a fellow Mississippian, Mr. Samuel B. Olden of Yazoo City, on the occasion of his 95th birthday.

Mr. Olden is from Yazoo City, the ''Gateway to the Mississippi Delta,'' where he was born in 1919, to a family of Mississippi planters. Throughout his youth, he read widely in the B.S. Ricks Memorial Library—the oldest privately-funded public library in the State—which greatly contributed to his personal development and admission into the University of Mississippi in Oxford. There, he received a B.A. and M.A., reportedly conversed with Nobel Prize-winning author William Faulkner, and was ultimately recruited to Washington, DC, to serve at the Department of State. Prior to American involvement in World War II, Mr. Olden was sent abroad as the Vice Consul at our embassy in Quito, Ecuador, from 1941 to 1943. Upon his return, Mr. Olden enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving from 1943 to 1946 at posts ranging from Shanghai, China, to Paris, France.

After the war Mr. Olden transited the North Atlantic on a Liberty ship. A fellow naval officer noted Mr. Olden's fortitude during this stormy passage. While tending to his ailing father back in Mississippi, he received a letter from Washington asking him to consider defending our Nation's freedom, in a third essential way. Mr. Olden returned to the District of Columbia, where he was invited to join the newly formed Central Intelligence Group. Commencing in 1947, Mr. Olden spent 2 years in the group's Washington office, followed by 3 years in Vienna, Austria, where he defended freedom and democracy against Communist aggression.

Following a decade in public service, Mr. Olden entered the private sector, where he employed his experience abroad for a predecessor of Exxon Mobil. From 1952–1957, he was posted in East and West Nigeria, British and French Cameroon, the Congo, Chad, and Gabon. He joined Mobil's government relations department in 1957 and returned to New York. There, he attained observer status at the United Nations and strode the halls with Adlai Stevenson and Eleanor Roosevelt. Later, he went abroad once more to serve as general manager of Mobil's affiliates in Tunisia, Algeria, Peru, and Spain.

By 1974, Mr. Olden was fluent in English, French, German, and Spanish. He had connections around the world. And where did he go? He chose to retire to the finest place he had ever lived: Yazoo City. There, he owned and operated a cattle ranch for 15 years, while continuing to pursue his passion for the study of history. He was twice a board member and was elected president of the Mississippi Historical Society, served 15 years on the State committee for the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, and founded the Yazoo Historical Society's remarkable museum—housed in the same Triangle Center building where he had attended elementary school. Even in his nineties, he established and helped to fund the Yazoo Memorial Literary Walkway, which stretches between the Triangle Center and the B.S. Ricks Library. The walkway memorializes more than 100 Yazooan authors to include former House Minority Leader and Senator John Sharp Williams, literary critic and editor Henry Herschel Brickell, Gov. Haley Reeves Barbour, beloved writers Willie Morris, Teresa Nicholas, and Ruth Williams, and educator Henry Mitchell Brickell. His large collection of pre-Columbian ceramics is now on display in the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson.

This remarkable man has served his Nation as a diplomat, military officer, and emissary, during wars hot and cold. He served the world in the energy industry as a global businessman of distinction. He returned to his hometown and has continued to serve his State, his university, and his community as a historian, educator and philanthropist even into the 10th decade of his life. His friends across the Nation and around the world celebrate with him today.•

TRIBUTE TO PETE BALLARD

• Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor Pete Ballard, a dear friend and a truly remarkable West Virginian who is known throughout the Mountain State and far past our borders for his many talents, especially for his global recognition of his still life paintings and historic period doll creations.

A native of Welch, located in the southern-most part of our State in McDowell County, Pete currently resides in Peterstown, an idyllic small town in the rolling emerald hills of Monroe County. Although Pete's career in the arts has taken him across the country and around the world, including Saudi Arabia, China and Vietnam, there has never been a doubt that Pete's roots are truly imbedded in West Virginia.

After receiving a degree in education from Concord University, Pete began teaching. However, it wasn't long before Pete's propensities steered him far beyond just a career in education, leading him to partake in many more professional ventures.

Today, as an award-winning educator, celebrated artist, renowned painter, nationally acclaimed costume designer, curator, historian, and famous doll creator, Pete's passion for the arts and creativity know no bounds.

Many of Pete's paintings are now displayed in museums and art galleries across the country. Today, three of Pete's exceptional paintings are displayed among the most celebrated collection of American Still Life paintings at The Butler Institute, which is America's first museum to collect American art. His work will forever be a part of such an extraordinary collection of America's best artwork.

In addition to his distinguished paintings, Pete has most recently been recognized across the country for his unique creation of 19th century fashion dolls. Pete creates each doll based on meticulously researched and authentic period fashion. Made from head to toe in papier-mâché, the dolls' figures range from approximately 3 to 5 feet tall and wear costumes that are designed in period clothing.

Due to Pete's painstaking attention to detail along with his fashion expertise, hard work and brilliant vision, he is no stranger to receiving prestigious awards. As Governor, I was honored to name Pete as a Distinguished West Virginian. He has also received the Grand Groundhog Watcher Award. Both of these awards were created to honor those who have contributed significantly to West Virginia and those who have brought positive attention to our great State. He was also named Concord University's Golden Alumnus, is among the Outstanding Educators in America, and has received the Order of the Arts and Historical Letters from the West Virginia Division of Culture and History. Pete's paintings and dolls have also been displayed in galas and exhibitions around West Virginia and across the country.

Despite his astounding success, Pete has never collected a dime for his work. After spending 12 hours a day, 7 days a week working on each piece of art, he merely donates every painting and every doll he doesn't hold for keepsake to charity or to art galleries.

It has been an honor and privilege to know such a gifted West Virginian. Pete Ballard's imprint will always be marked by his brilliant creations and his countless contributions to the State of West Virginia. I join all West Virginians in celebrating his vast achievements, which will live on in our history books, atop the same shelves as some of the most distinguished artwork of our time and mounted on the walls of esteemed museums.

After all these years, I continue to look forward to viewing many more paintings and doll creations because at the age of 83, Pete continues to work on his art every day.•

TRIBUTE TO PHYLLIS RHODES

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I wish to thank Phyllis Rhodes for her outstanding service to the Municipality of Anchorage, the Federal court system, and Identity, Inc. on the occasion of her retirement.

Born in Arizona and raised in Texas, Phyllis and her former husband moved to Alaska in 1967 with their young daughter Anne, making their home in Anchorage. A second daughter, Emily, made her appearance after the family relocated to Alaska. Since her arrival in Alaska Phyllis' contributions to the cause of equality for the LGBTQ community, and all Alaskans, has become legendary.

Phyllis started out as the volunteer coordinator for Identity, Inc. but with her usual passion and commitment, she started picking up speed, eventually becoming the unpaid executive director of the organization. Over the course of her 10 years as executive director of Identity, Inc. Phyllis has taken the organization from obscurity to high visibility in Anchorage and across Alaska. During Phyllis' tenure, Identity, Inc. expanded its programs and began outreach to new audiences. The creation of an advocacy team has led to open dialogues with Alaska businesses, churches, educational institutions and other organizations. Within the LGBTQ community, Phyllis is the recognized heart and soul of Identity, Inc.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Phyllis for her many years of advocating for equality. I wish the absolute best to her, her wife Pam, and her daughters Anne and Emily, as they begin this next stage in their lives.•

REMEMBERING COLONEL OLA LEE MIZE

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the passing of a great Alabamian, COL Ola Lee Mize, on March 12, 2014. Colonel Mize was a native of Marshall County and an American hero. He embodied the ideals of service and courage that make our State proud.

Colonel Mize was born on August 28, 1931, in Marshall County, and dropped out of high school after ninth grade to provide for his family. He was rejected for enlistment by the Army numerous times because he was blind in one eye and they claimed he was too small. Eventually he was accepted and joined the 82nd Airborne Division.

He is perhaps best remembered by his defense of Outpost Harry when it was attacked during the Korean war. Colonel Mize bravely protected injured comrades and held opposition forces at bay, valiantly risking his life for others. For this intrepid gallantry, Colonel Mize earned a Medal of Honor, which remains on display in the Guntersville Museum.

Colonel Mize went on to join the Special Forces and served 3½ tours in Vietnam with the Green Berets and then served as an Active-Duty advisor to National Guard Special Forces units. Throughout the course of his military career, he was awarded the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and, of course, the Medal of Honor. Colonel Mize continued to be active in veterans' events and where he was known and honored by all. He retired in 1981 after 31 years of service.

Mary and I mourn his passing and send our condolences to his wife Betty, his daughter Teresa Peterson, and his six brothers and sisters. Alabama has lost a true hero and his legend will grow. I was honored to get to know him. He was a remarkable man whose courage on the battlefield extended to a determination to do the right thing in all aspects of life.•

REMEMBERING JOHN RICHARD MILLER, JR.

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the passing of a great Alabamian, John Richard Miller, Jr., who died on January 26, 1024. Mr. Miller was a native and longtime resident of Brewton, AL.

After graduating from Culver Military Academy in Culver, IN, he attended the University of Alabama. Mr. Miller served as a pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 8th Air Force, in the European Theatre of Operation during World War II, receiving the Air Medal, E.T.O. Medal, and a Presidential Citation, and was discharged with the rank of major.

After his military service, he returned to Brewton where, like his father and grandfather, was employed by T.R. Miller Mill Company where he held various positions including chairman of the board from 1986 to 2009, and chairman emeritus until his death. He also served on many other boards and was a founding member of the Bank of Mobile. He was the third generation patriarch of this family and its businesses. He was also very committed to

his churches, the First United Methodist Church in Brewton and in Destin.

Mr. Miller was a lifelong member of the Brewton Rotary Club, served on the Brewton City School Board, the president's cabinet and the business school's Board of Visitors at the University of Alabama, and was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by the University of Alabama. He also received an honorary doctorate degree from Mobile College, now the University of Mobile. He was inducted into the Alabama Business Hall of Fame, like his father before him, at the University of Alabama.

Mr. Miller was a great outdoorsman and excellent wing shot but also loved his fishing—particularly fishing Shipp Pond, Apalachicola Bay, and the Gulf of Mexico with family and friends.

Mr. Miller will always be remembered for his great humility, generosity, and love of his fellow man. He leaves behind his wife of 70 years, Virginia Earl Kersh Miller, and their four children, Nancy Miller Melton, John Richard Miller, III, David Earl Miller, and Jean Miller Stimpson, as well as many other family members and friends. They have been given a great legacy indeed.●

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES D. McCRARY

● Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, along with my fellow Alabama colleague JEFF SESSIONS, I wish to pay tribute to Charles D. McCrary, who retired this month from his position as the president and chief executive officer of Alabama Power Company.

Mr. McCrary's involvement with Alabama Power extends back to the summer of 1970, when he joined the company following his freshman year at Auburn University. During a long and distinguished career, he assumed positions of increasing responsibility, rising from vice president for Southern Nuclear Operating Company, to president of Southern Company Generation, chief production officer of Southern Company and president of Southern Power Company. On October 25, 2001, Mr. McCrary became the tenth president and CEO of Alabama Power, which generates electricity for over 1.4 million Alabama customers.

A Birmingham native, Mr. McCrary attended Shades Valley High School and received his bachelor of science in mechanical engineering from Auburn University, followed by a juris doctor from Birmingham School of Law. He was admitted to the Alabama State Bar in 1979.

Mr. McCrary is married to the former Phyllis Brantley of Birmingham and is the father of two sons, Doug and Alex.

Throughout his tenure at Alabama Power, Mr. McCrary has served the company and its customers with the highest standards of integrity and professionalism. He also oversaw Alabama Power during some of our State's most severe natural disasters, including Hurricane Ivan in 2004, which caused 825,701 outages, the largest number of outages in company history; Hurricane Katrina in 2005 with 636,891 outages; and the tornado disaster on April 27, 2011 with 412,000 outages. In the wake of these disasters, Mr. McCrary initiated the policy of publicizing when customers could expect their power to be restored. This practice of announcing utility restoration commitments has since become an industry standard.

Mr. McCrary also pioneered ''Target Zero,'' a program for ensuring that employees are properly trained and equipped to do their jobs safely. This practice too has become a touchstone within the utility industry.

Mr. McCrary is a dynamic leader both in his community and throughout the State of Alabama, and serves as chairman of the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama and on the boards of Regions Financial Corporation, Mercedes-Benz U.S. International Inc., Protective Life Corporation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Southern Research Institute, and the Auburn University Board of Trustees.

Committed to fostering economic development at both the regional and State levels, Mr. McCrary has advanced cooperative efforts between cities, counties, and business leaders in order to bring several industries, including automotive, aerospace, and steel manufacturers to Alabama.

Please join me and Senator SESSIONS in congratulating Charles on his retirement and in thanking him for his leadership at Alabama Power, for his dedication to improving his local community, and for his decades of service to the great State of Alabama. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:59 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, 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. 1228. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 South 9th Street in De Pere, Wisconsin, as the ''Corporal Justin D. Ross Post Office Building''.

H.R. 1459. An act to ensure that the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 applies to the declaration of national monuments, and for other purposes.

At 2:10 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, 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. 4278. An act to support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4302. An act to amend the Social Security Act to extend Medicare payments to physicians and other provisions of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1228. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 South 9th Street in De Pere, Wisconsin, as the ''Corporal Justin D. Ross Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1459. An act to ensure that the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 applies to the declaration of national monuments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–5011. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Adjustments to Civil Penalty Amounts'' (16 CFR Part 1) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–5012. A communication from the Chairman and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Bank's 2013 Annual Report; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–5013. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Alternative Fuel Transportation Program; Alternative Fueled Vehicle Credit Program Modification and Other Amendments'' (RIN1904–AB81) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 21, 2014; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5014. A communication from the Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Special Regulations, Areas of the National Park System, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, Bicycling'' (RIN1024–AE12) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2014; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5015. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''National Academies Review of DOE's Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Activities''; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–5016. A communication from the Program Manager, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Third Party Payment of Qualified Health Plan Premiums'' (RIN0938–AS28) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 18, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5017. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the

Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Update for Weighted Average Interest Rates, Yield Curves, and Segment Rates'' (Notice 2014–16) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5018. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Correction to Revenue Procedure 2014–4'' (Rev. Proc. 2014–19) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5019. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Interim Guidance on Per Capita Distributions Made to Indian Tribe Members from Funds Held in Trust by the Secretary of the Interior'' (Notice 2014–17) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5020. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Information Reporting by Applicable Large Employers on Health Insurance Coverage Offered Under Employer-Sponsored Plans'' ((RIN1545–BL26) (TD 9661)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 11, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5021. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the fiscal year 2013 report of the Department of Health and Human Services' Federal Coordinated Health Care Office; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5022. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Recovery Auditing in the Medicare and Medicaid Program for Fiscal Year 2012''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5023. A communication from the Board of Trustees, National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual management report relative to its operations and financial condition; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5024. A communication from the Chair of the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to Congress on Medicaid and CHIP''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–5025. A communication from the Chairman, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to the Congress: Medicare Payment Policy''; to the Committee on Finance.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CARPER, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 994. A bill to expand the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 to increase accountability and transparency in Federal spending, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–139).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Ms. LANDRIEU for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

*Janice Marion Schneider, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

*Rhea Sun Suh, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife.

By Mr. LEAHY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Gregg Jeffrey Costa, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Tanya S. Chutkan, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

M. Hannah Lauck, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

John Charles Cruden, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Leo T. Sorokin, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2164. A bill to prevent harassment at institutions of higher education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2165. A bill to enhance consumer access to electricity information and allow for the adoption of innovative products and services to help consumers manage their energy usage; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BEGICH, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 2166. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify provisions relating to determinations of full-time equivalent employees for purposes of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 2167. A bill to establish a grant program for career education in computer science; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. KING):

S. 2168. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of large employer for purposes of applying the employer mandate; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 2169. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce the rate of tax regarding the taxation of distilled spirits; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 2170. A bill to free the private sector to harness domestic energy resources to create jobs and generate economic growth by removing statutory and administrative barriers; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2171. A bill to address voluntary location tracking of electronic communications devices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2172. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to improve nonretaliation provisions relating to equal pay requirements; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 2173. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide a permanent path for the direct enrollment of individuals in qualified health plans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. FRANKEN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 2174. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide greater flexibility in offering health insurance coverage across State lines; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 2175. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to enhance access for independent agents and brokers to information regarding marketplace enrollment; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 2176. A bill to revise reporting requirements under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to preserve the privacy of individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2177. A bill to establish an Office of Forensic Science and a Forensic Science Board, to strengthen and promote confidence in the criminal justice system by ensuring scientific validity, reliability, and accuracy in forensic testing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. HATCH, Mr. SCOTT, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 2178. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act with respect to the timing of elections and pre-election hearings and the identification of pre-election issues, and to require that lists of employees eligible to vote in organizing elections be provided to the National Labor Relations Board; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY:

S. 2179. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to waive the minimum period of continuous active duty in the Armed Forces for receipt of benefits for homeless veterans, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish benefits for homeless veterans to homeless veterans with discharges

or releases from service in the Armed Forces under other than honorable conditions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 2180. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend tax incentives to certain live theatrical performances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BEGICH (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2181. A bill to authorize and strengthen the tsunami detection, forecast, warning, research, and mitigation program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WALSH (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2182. A bill to expand and improve care provided to veterans and members of the Armed Forces with mental health disorders or at risk of suicide, to review the terms or characterization of the discharge or separation of certain individuals from the Armed Forces, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. 2183. A bill entitled ''United States International Programming to Ukraine and Neighboring Regions''; considered and passed.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. COATS):

S.J. Res. 35. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service of the Department of the Treasury relating to liability under section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for the shared responsibility payment for not maintaining minimum essential coverage; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. Res. 400. A resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Great Alaska Earthquake, which struck the State of Alaska at 5:36 p.m. on Good Friday, March 27, 1964, honoring those who lost their lives in the Great Alaska Earthquake and associated tsunamis, and expressing continued support for research on earthquake and tsunami prediction and mitigation strategies; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. Res. 401. A resolution recognizing Easy Company, 2nd Battalion of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin):

S. Res. 402. A resolution expressing the regret of the Senate for the passage of section 3 of the Expatriation Act of 1907 (34 Stat. 1228) that revoked the United States citizenship of women who married foreign nationals; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin):

S. Res. 403. A resolution condemning the actions of the Government of Turkey in restricting free expression and Internet freedom on social media; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. REID, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BENNET, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. WARREN):

S. Res. 404. A resolution honoring the accomplishments and legacy of Cesar Estrada Chavez; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 15

At the request of Mr. THUNE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 15, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

S. 84

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) 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. 411

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 411, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 526

At the request of Mr. BENNET, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 526, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the special rule for contributions of qualified conservation contributions, and for other purposes.

S. 557

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 557, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to medication therapy management under part D of the Medicare program.

S. 727

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 727, a bill to improve the examination of depository institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 822

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 822, a bill to protect crime victims' rights, to eliminate the substantial backlog of DNA samples collected from crime scenes and convicted offenders, to improve and expand the DNA testing capacity of Federal, State, and local crime laboratories, to increase research and development of new DNA testing technologies, to develop new training programs regarding the collection and use of DNA evidence, to provide post conviction testing of DNA evidence to exonerate the innocent, to improve the performance of counsel in State capital cases, and for other purposes.

S. 948

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 948, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage and payment for complex rehabilitation technology items under the Medicare program.

S. 958

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 958, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce the tax on beer to its pre-1991 level, and for other purposes.

S. 975

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 975, a bill to provide for the inclusion of court-appointed guardianship improvement and oversight activities under the Elder Justice Act of 2009.

S. 1011

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1011, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

S. 1333

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1333, a bill to reinstate funding for the Consumer Operated and Oriented Plan Program.

S. 1343

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1343, a bill to protect the information of livestock producers, and for other purposes.

S. 1695

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1695, a bill to designate a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness.

S. 1737

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Missouri

(Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1737, a bill to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend increased expensing limitations and the treatment of certain real property as section 179 property.

S. 1862

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1862, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Monuments Men, in recognition of their heroic role in the preservation, protection, and restitution of monuments, works of art, and artifacts of cultural importance during and following World War II.

S. 1925

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1925, a bill to limit the retrieval of data from vehicle event data recorders.

S. 1998

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1998, a bill to amend the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act to reserve funds for American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Tribal College or University adult education and literacy.

S. 2048

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2048, a bill to include New Zealand in the list of foreign states whose nationals are eligible for admission into the United States as E–1 and E–2 nonimmigrants if United States nationals are treated similarly by the Government of New Zealand.

S. 2069

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2069, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand and modify the credit for employee health insurance expenses of small employers.

S. 2075

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2075, a bill to prohibit a reduction in funding for the defense commissary system in fiscal year 2015 pending the report of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

S. 2091

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2091, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processing by the Department of Veterans Affairs of claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2127

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2127, a bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 relative to the powers of the Department of Justice Inspector General.

S. RES. 361

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 361, a resolution recognizing the threats to freedom of the press and expression in the People's Republic of China and urging the Government of the People's Republic of China to take meaningful steps to improve freedom of expression as fitting of a responsible international stakeholder.

S. RES. 364

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 364, a resolution expressing support for the internal rebuilding, resettlement, and reconciliation within Sri Lanka that are necessary to ensure a lasting peace.

S. RES. 369

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 369, a resolution to designate May 22, 2014 as ''United States Foreign Service Day'' in recognition of the men and women who have served, or are presently serving, in the Foreign Service of the United States, and to honor those in the Foreign Service who have given their lives in the line of duty.

S. RES. 377

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 377, a resolution recognizing the 193rd anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2164. A bill to prevent harassment at institutions of higher education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, as many in this Chamber know, I am very proud of the many ways my home State of Washington is leading the way. Our State is an economic leader. We are home to the American aerospace industry, we have a thriving agricultural sector, and dozens of companies creating new products and new jobs with cutting-edge technology. We are a leader in protecting the environment and educating our children. Washington State is also the place that tens of thousands of servicemembers and veterans call home.

Last, but not least, I could not be more proud of our State's history of protecting the rights of all of our citizens, including members of the LGBT community. We know in Washington State that it is wrong to discriminate against people. We know that a person's race, religion, or gender have nothing to do with their worth as a human being, and we know that actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity don't either. We get that in my home State of Washington, but we can't stop working until the same is true in all 50 States, and that is why I have come to the Senate floor today.

I want to share with everyone a story about a young man by the name of Kris. Kris will be the first to tell you he has not led the easiest of lives. After turning 18 years old and aging out of the foster care system in Texas, Kris found himself homeless at 18 years old in Houston and sleeping on whatever park bench or apartment roof was available to him that evening.

As luck would have it, one night while Kris was searching for a public restroom to use, he stumbled on an admissions fair for the University of Houston's downtown campus. Kris had always had ambitions to go to college, but because of his very unstable childhood and minimal income, pursuing higher education was never a priority. Once he learned that night that tuition for the school was waived for foster system alumni, this dream seemed more like a reality so Kris decided to enroll.

He went to school, declared his major in social work, and settled into college life. He made friends and participated in extracurricular activities on campus.

In fact, Kris got so involved that one of his good friends, Isaac, invited him to be his running mate for the upcoming student government election. Kris was very excited about that idea and realized it was his opportunity to make a real difference for many of the students on campus who had been through some of the same trying experiences he had.

Kris and Isaac kicked off their campaign and pursued elective office. Then 1 day—in fact 1 year ago this month—Kris was called into the dean of students office. Kris sat down and the dean reached into his briefcase and pulled out a stack of fliers with Kris's photo on each and every one of them with a big X across his picture. In big, bold letters across the top of the flier, it read: ''WANT AIDS?'' Across the bottom of that flier it read: ''Don't Support the Isaac and Kris Homosexual Agenda.'' On the back of the flier—unbelievably—was a copy of Kris's official

private medical record displaying in plain view that Kris was HIV positive. Stunning. I am sure every one of you are as stunned as I was.

The dean then informed Kris that these had been found all over the campus. As if the situation couldn't get any worse, the dean told Kris that there is nothing the university or the administration could do about it—nothing.

At one point Kris said the administration even accused him of being responsible for these acts. Kris was told the administration's sole responsibility was to simply inform him this was going on and nothing more. They just had to make sure he knew about it.

Kris was told that words such as homosexual or AIDS were proper terms, protected speech, and not grounds for punishment.

As you can imagine, Kris was devastated. He didn't attend class for weeks after that. His friends, family, and loved ones started to seriously worry about his well-being.

In the meantime, the word of this and Kris's status as HIV positive, as you can imagine, spread like wildfire across the campus. While Kris had been out to a small group of friends, there was no going back once the local paper picked up on the story which eventually circulated in the national media.

Thankfully, there is a happy ending to this heartbreaking story. In yet another example of how the younger generation in our country is swiftly helping to turn the tide against intolerance, Kris and Isaac won that election, and Kris served a term as the student body vice president. Kris has now moved on to serve in a different but somewhat similar capacity, and that is as a congressional intern here in my office in Washington, DC. I am proud to say that Kris is here with us on the floor today. And just like the fate he found that one night in search of a public restroom, Kris now has another chance to be part of a life-changing experience because today I have come to the floor to reintroduce the Tyler Clemente Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014.

As many of you may remember, this legislation is named after Tyler Clemente. He was an 18-year-old freshman at Rutgers University. Back in 2010, without his knowledge, Tyler's roommate streamed video footage on the Internet of Tyler in his dorm room being intimate with another male. After his roommate and another student invaded his privacy in such a serious way and continued to harass him over the Internet, Tyler leapt off the George Washington Bridge and sadly took his own life.

When I sat down and spoke with Kris about this recently, he told me how his story was very close to ending just like Tyler's story. He didn't have anyone on campus to turn to. Since the administration said they were unable to do anything about this hate crime, Kris felt he had no opportunity for closure.

Kris told me:

> For most young people, when things like that happen, we have got to have people who are going to be proactive in helping them. And not someone telling them there's nothing we can do to help you.

Quite shockingly, despite statistics telling us that LGBT students are nearly twice as likely to experience harassment when compared to their heterosexual peers, there is no Federal requirement that colleges and universities have policies to protect their students from harassment.

That is why I feel so strongly about this legislation.

The legislation I am introducing will require colleges and universities that receive Federal aid to establish anti-harassment policies for students no matter who they are or what they identify with, and they will be required to have the language of those policies easily accessible. It will recognize cyber bullying of all kinds as serious means of harassment. Finally, the Tyler Clementi act authorizes competitive grants for schools to initiate or expand programs to prevent these kinds of things from happening, to provide counseling for victims of the accused, and to train everyone on campus about how to prevent this in the future.

When I was back home last week in Spokane, I told Kris's story, just as I did today, and talked about the desperate need for these kinds of protections. I am sure, as with many of those listening, most of my constituents were pretty surprised to learn these policies aren't already in place at all of our institutions of higher learning. I couldn't agree more. Why aren't colleges and universities across our country all being proactive in establishing these programs and points of contact for students such as Tyler or Kris who have experienced or could experience such a life-changing event?

While many schools currently have successful prevention and counseling programs in place, students shouldn't have to take their health and safety into account when they decide where they are going to study in this country.

Kris recounted for me how each day during this horrible experience he would awaken, and there were 5 or 6 seconds where he would feel normal again, as if nothing had happened. But then reality would set in, and it felt as though a ton of bricks had fallen on top of him. Fortunately for Kris, he was able to lean on the campus LGBT community for support during this very trying time. But he said:

> If I hadn't reached out to the community, I probably wouldn't be here today. Every day going to school felt like a battlefield.

Unfortunately, there are others similar to Kris who don't have that point of contact on campus—a supportive parent or a tight-knit group of friends who help them get through these kinds of experiences.

I am very proud to be here today, with the support of my outstanding cosponsor, Senator BALDWIN, to take a major step to change this.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to pay tribute to my friend Senator Frank Lautenberg and his staff for their tireless work to craft this original bill which serves as a tremendous honor to the life of Tyler Clementi. No student, whether they are gay or straight or Black or White or Christian or Muslim, should have to face discrimination and harassment in pursuit of their education. While I know it is impossible to eradicate all bad behavior from our society, we have to arm our campuses with the tools and resources necessary to not only efficiently and effectively support the victims but also to take action against those who have perpetrated such senseless crimes.

That is why I am here today. I am very proud to introduce this legislation.

I wish to thank Kris for his courage in speaking out and his ability to be here today to make sure no other student in our country ever has to go through what he did.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2177. A bill to establish an Office of Forensic Science and a Forensic Science Board, to strengthen and promote confidence in the criminal justice system by ensuring scientific validity, reliability, and accuracy in forensic testing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, from DNA to digital evidence, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges are becoming increasingly reliant on the collection and analysis of various forms of forensic evidence in a criminal investigation or prosecution. It is therefore all the more important that we strengthen our confidence in the criminal justice system, and the evidence it relies upon, by ensuring that forensic evidence and testimony is accurate, credible, and scientifically grounded.

I am proud to introduce today the Criminal Justice and Forensic Science Reform Act. This legislation represents a comprehensive and commonsense approach toward guaranteeing the effectiveness and scientific integrity of forensic evidence used in criminal cases, and in ensuring that Americans can have faith in their criminal justice system. The bill is also bipartisan, and I am pleased that Senator CORNYN has agreed to be a cosponsor of this legislation.

Over the course of the past 5 years, my staff and I have spent countless hours talking to prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement officers, judges, forensic practitioners, academic experts, and many, many others to learn as much as we could about what is happening in the forensic sciences and what needs to be done. As this effort has progressed, I have been disturbed to learn about still more cases in which innocent people may have been convicted, and perhaps even executed, in part due to faulty forensic

evidence or the lack of valid forensic evidence. Since the first post-conviction DNA exoneration in the United States in 1989, there have been 314 DNA exonerations. These exonerees spent an average of 13.5 years in prison, amounting to an astounding total of 4,202 years. It is a double tragedy when an innocent person is convicted. An innocent person suffers, and a guilty person remains free, leaving us all less safe. We must do everything we can to avoid that untenable outcome.

It has also become abundantly clear through the course of this inquiry that the men and women who test and analyze forensic evidence do tremendous work that is vital to our criminal justice system. I remember their important contributions and hard work from my days as a prosecutor in Vermont, and the rapid development and expansion of the forensic science disciplines since that time has been extraordinary. So their work is even more important today, and we need to strengthen the field of forensics, and the justice system's confidence in it, so that their hard work can be consistently relied upon, as it should be.

Everyone recognizes the need for forensic evidence that is accurate and reliable. Prosecutors and law enforcement officers want evidence that can be relied upon to determine guilt and prove it beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. Defense attorneys want strong evidence that can be used to exclude innocent people from suspicion. Forensic science practitioners want their work to have as much certainty as possible and to be able to testify in court with confidence and integrity. All scientists and all attorneys who care about these issues want the scientific analysis that is admitted as evidence in the courtroom to meet the same rigorous testing and research standards found in the laboratory.

There is general agreement that the forensic sciences can be improved through strong and unassailable research to test and establish the validity of the forensic disciplines, as well as the application of consistent and established standards in the field. There is also a dire need for well managed and appropriately directed funding for research, development, training, and technical assistance. It is a good investment that will lead to fewer trials and appeals, and will reduce crime by ensuring that those who commit serious offenses are promptly captured and convicted. There is also broad consensus that all forensic laboratories should be required to meet rigorous accreditation standards and that forensic practitioners should be required to obtain meaningful certification.

Finally, there is wide acknowledgement about the need for comprehensive legislation to address all of these issues. I first introduced a version of this legislation in 2011, after an extensive process of consultation with experts and stakeholders that included three Judiciary Committee hearings, dozens of meetings with individuals and organizations, and multiple drafts and revisions of legislative proposals. We have continued to refine this bill over the past 3 years, and the legislation Senator CORNYN and I introduce today is the product of that ongoing conversation.

I have been encouraged by the efforts of the Department of Justice and National Institute of Standards and Technology, NIST, to implement administratively some of the basic structural reforms contained in our bill, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding that led to the formation of the National Commission on Forensic Science. However, executive action is not enough. Congress must enact comprehensive forensic science reform legislation, and I look forward to working with the Department of Justice, NIST, the National Science Foundation, and others to make sure we implement the necessary reforms as expeditiously as possible.

This is not a partisan issue. Improving the reliability of forensic evidence does not advance the interests of just prosecutors or defendants, or of Democrats or Republicans. It is in the interest of justice. Senator CORNYN recognizes this, and I am proud to have him as a cosponsor of this important legislation. We will continue to work diligently with senators on both sides of the aisle, and I hope many other senators will join us to cosponsor this legislation, and work with me to ensure its passage.

I want to thank the forensic science practitioners, experts, advocates, law enforcement personnel, judges, and so many others whose input forms the basis for this legislation. Their passion for this issue and for getting it right gives me confidence that we will work together successfully to make much needed progress in implementing comprehensive forensic reform legislation.

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. 2177

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 ''Criminal Justice and Forensic Science Reform Act''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Definitions.
Sec. 3. Purpose.

TITLE I—STRUCTURE AND OVERSIGHT

Sec. 101. Office of Forensic Science.
Sec. 102. Forensic Science Board.
Sec. 103. Committees.
Sec. 104. Authorization of appropriations.

TITLE II—ACCREDITATION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORIES

Sec. 201. Accreditation of forensic science laboratories.
Sec. 202. Standards for laboratory accreditation.
Sec. 203. Administration and enforcement of accreditation program.

TITLE III—CERTIFICATION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE PERSONNEL

Sec. 301. Definitions.
Sec. 302. Certification of forensic science personnel.
Sec. 303. Standards for certification.
Sec. 304. Administration and review of certification program.
Sec. 305. Support and technical assistance for State and local laboratories.

TITLE IV—RESEARCH

Sec. 401. Research strategy and priorities.
Sec. 402. Research grants.
Sec. 403. Oversight and review.
Sec. 404. Public-private collaboration.

TITLE V—STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES

Sec. 501. Development of standards and best practices.
Sec. 502. Establishment and dissemination of standards and best practices.
Sec. 503. Review and oversight.

TITLE VI—ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE OF FORENSIC SCIENCE AND THE FORENSIC SCIENCE BOARD

Sec. 601. Forensic science training and education for judges, attorneys, and law enforcement personnel.
Sec. 602. Educational programs in the forensic sciences.
Sec. 603. Medicolegal death investigation.
Sec. 604. Intergovernmental coordination.
Sec. 605. Anonymous reporting.
Sec. 606. Interoperability of databases and technologies.
Sec. 607. Code of ethics.
Sec. 608. Needs assessment.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) BOARD.—The term ''Board'' means the Forensic Science Board established under section 102(a).

(2) COMMITTEE.—The term ''Committee'' means a committee established under section 103(a)(2).

(3) DIRECTOR.—The term ''Director'' means the Director of the Office.

(4) FORENSIC SCIENCE DISCIPLINE.—The term ''forensic science discipline'' shall have the meaning given that term by the Director in accordance with section 102(h).

(5) FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY.—The term ''forensic science laboratory'' shall have the meaning given that term by the Director in accordance with section 201(c).

(6) NIST.—The term ''NIST'' means the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(7) OFFICE.—The term ''Office'' means the Office of Forensic Science established under section 101(a).

(8) RELEVANT PERSONNEL.—The term ''relevant personnel'' shall have the meaning given that term by the Director in accordance with section 301(b).

SEC. 3. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to strengthen and promote confidence in the criminal justice system by promoting standards and best practices and ensuring scientific validity, reliability, and accuracy with respect to forensic testing, analysis, identification, and comparisons, the results of which may be interpreted, presented, or otherwise used during the course of a criminal investigation or criminal court proceeding.

TITLE I—STRUCTURE AND OVERSIGHT

SEC. 101. OFFICE OF FORENSIC SCIENCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established an Office of Forensic Science within the Office of the Deputy Attorney General in the Department of Justice.

(b) OFFICERS AND STAFF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall include—

(A) a Director, who shall have a background in science and be appointed by the Attorney General; and

(B) such other officers and staff as the Deputy Attorney General and the Director determine appropriate.

(2) LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR.—The Director shall have primary responsibility for establishing and implementing national policy regarding forensic science as used in the criminal justice system.

(3) DEADLINE.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the initial appointment and hiring under paragraph (1) shall be completed.

(c) VACANCY.—In the event of a vacancy in the position of Director—

(1) the Attorney General shall designate an acting Director; and

(2) during any period of vacancy before designation of an acting Director, the Deputy Attorney General shall serve as acting Director.

(d) COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION WITH NIST.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the appointment of the Director, the Director and the Director of NIST shall establish a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure collaboration and coordination in the implementation of this Act.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Memorandum of Understanding required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) policies and procedures to ensure that, in implementing this Act, the Director and the Director of NIST—

(i) incorporate appropriately the priorities and expertise of law enforcement and forensic practitioners; and

(ii) establish structures designed to guarantee independent and objective scientific determinations; and

(B) agreements governing—

(i) selection of members of Committees and support by NIST of the Committees in accordance with section 103;

(ii) administration by NIST of grant programs described in section 402;

(iii) designation of a liaison at NIST to facilitate communication between the Office and NIST; and

(iv) any other appropriate collaboration or coordination.

(e) LIAISON FROM THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.—The Director of the National Science Foundation, in consultation with the Director, shall designate a liaison at the National Science Foundation to—

(1) facilitate communication and collaboration between the Office and the National Science Foundation; and

(2) encourage participation by the National Science Foundation in implementing title IV of this Act.

(f) DUTIES AND AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Office shall—

(A) assist the Board in carrying out all the functions of the Board under this Act and such other related functions as are necessary to perform the functions of the Board; and

(B) evaluate and act upon the recommendations of the Board in accordance with paragraph (3).

(2) SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Director shall—

(A) establish, lead, and oversee implementation of accreditation and certification standards under titles II and III;

(B) establish a comprehensive strategy for scientific research in the forensic sciences under title IV;

(C) establish standards and best practices for forensic science disciplines under title V;

(D) define the term ''forensic science discipline'' for the purposes of this Act in accordance with section 102(h);

(E) establish and maintain a list of forensic science disciplines in accordance with section 102(h);

(F) establish Committees in accordance with section 103;

(G) define the term ''forensic science laboratory'' for the purposes of this Act in accordance with section 201(c);

(H) establish a code of ethics for the forensic science disciplines in accordance with section 607; and

(I) perform all other functions of the Office under this Act and such other related functions as are necessary to perform the functions of the Office described in this Act.

(3) CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon receiving a recommendation from the Board, the Director shall—

(i) give substantial deference to the recommendation; and

(ii) not later than 30 days after the date on which the Director receives the recommendation, determine whether to adopt, modify, or reject the recommendation.

(B) MODIFICATION.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—If the Director determines to substantially modify a recommendation under subparagraph (A), the Director shall immediately notify the Board of the proposed modification.

(ii) BOARD RECOMMENDATION.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Director provides notice to the Board under clause (i), the Board shall submit to the Director a recommendation on whether the proposed modification should be adopted.

(iii) ACCEPTANCE OF MODIFICATION.—If the Board recommends that a proposed modification should be adopted under clause (ii), the Director may implement the modified recommendation.

(iv) REJECTION OF MODIFICATION.—If the Board recommends that a proposed modification should not be adopted under clause (ii), the Director shall, not later than 10 days after the date on which the Board makes the recommendation—

(I) provide notice and an explanation of the proposed modification to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives; and

(II) begin, with regard to the proposed modification, a rulemaking on the record after opportunity for an agency hearing.

(C) REJECTION.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Director determines to reject a recommendation under subparagraph (A), the Director shall—

(i) provide notice and an explanation of the decision to reject the recommendation to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives; and

(ii) begin, with regard to the recommendation, a rulemaking on the record after opportunity for an agency hearing.

(g) WEB SITE.—The Director shall—

(1) establish a Web site that is publicly accessible; and

(2) publish and maintain on the Web site—

(A) a central repository of recommendations of the Board and all standards, best practices, protocols, definitions, and other materials established, accepted, or amended, by the Director under this Act; and

(B) a central repository of current and past forensic science research, which shall be—

(i) collected and catalogued in a manner that is easily accessible to the public; and

(ii) updated no less frequently than once every 2 years.

SEC. 102. FORENSIC SCIENCE BOARD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established a Forensic Science Board to serve as an advisory board regarding forensic science in order to strengthen and promote confidence in the criminal justice system by promoting standards and best practices and ensuring scientific validity, reliability, and accuracy with respect to forensic testing, analysis, identification, and comparisons, the results of which may be interpreted, presented, or otherwise used during the course of a criminal investigation or criminal court proceeding.

(b) APPOINTMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall be composed of 17 members, who shall—

(A) be appointed by the President not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) come from professional communities that have expertise relevant to and significant interest in the field of forensic science.

(2) CONSIDERATION AND CONSULTATION.—In making an appointment under paragraph (1), the President shall—

(A) consider the need for the Board to exercise independent and objective scientific judgment; and

(B) consider, among other factors, membership on the National Commission on Forensic Science and recommendations from leading scientific organizations and leading professional organizations in the field of forensic science and other relevant fields.

(3) REQUIREMENTS.—The Board shall include—

(A) 11 voting members;

(B) 6 nonvoting members; and

(C) the exofficio members described in paragraph (7).

(4) VOTING MEMBER REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Of the 11 voting members—

(i) each shall have comprehensive scientific backgrounds;

(ii) not fewer than 6 shall have extensive experience and background in scientific research;

(iii) not fewer than 6 shall have extensive and current practical experience and background in forensic science; and

(iv) not less than 1 shall be a board certified forensic pathologist.

(B) MULTIPLE REQUIREMENTS.—An individual voting member may meet more than 1 of the requirements described in clauses (ii) through (iv) of subparagraph (A).

(5) NONVOTING MEMBERS.—One nonvoting member shall come from each of the following categories:

(A) Judges.

(B) Prosecutors.

(C) State and local law enforcement officials.

(D) Criminal defense attorneys.

(E) Organizations that represent people who may have been wrongly convicted.

(F) State and local laboratory directors.

(6) FULFILLMENT OF MULTIPLE REQUIREMENTS.—An individual who fulfills the requirements described in paragraph (4) may serve as a voting member even if that individual also fulfills a requirement described in paragraph (5).

(7) EX OFFICIO MEMBERS.—The Director, the Deputy Attorney General, and the Directors of NIST and the National Science Foundation, or their designees, shall serve as ex officio members of the Board and shall not participate in voting.

(8) APPOINTMENT OF BOARD CHAIRPERSON.—The President shall designate a voting member of the Board to serve as Chairperson of

the Board for the duration of that member's term.

(c) TERMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each voting and nonvoting member of the Board, excluding ex officio members, shall be appointed for a term of 6 years.

(2) EXCEPTION.—Of the members first appointed to the Board—

(A) 3 voting members and 2 nonvoting members shall serve a term of 2 years;

(B) 4 voting members and 2 nonvoting members shall serve a term of 4 years; and

(C) 4 voting members and 2 nonvoting members shall serve a term of 6 years.

(3) RENEWABLE TERM.—A voting or nonvoting member of the Board may be appointed for not more than a total of 2 terms, including an initial term described in paragraph (2).

(4) VACANCIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In the event of a vacancy, the President may appoint a member to fill the remainder of the term.

(B) ADDITIONAL TERM.—A member appointed under subparagraph (A) may be reappointed for 1 additional term.

(5) HOLDOVERS.—If a successor has not been appointed at the conclusion of the term of a member of the Board, the member of the Board may continue to serve until—

(A) a successor is appointed; or

(B) the member of the Board is reappointed.

(d) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Board shall—

(1) make recommendations to the Director relating to research priorities and needs, accreditation and certification standards, standards and protocols for forensic science disciplines, and any other issue consistent with this Act;

(2) monitor and evaluate—

(A) the administration of accreditation, certification, and research programs and procedures established under this Act; and

(B) the operation of the Committees;

(3) review and update, as appropriate, any recommendations made under paragraph (1);

(4) identify, as appropriate, any additional issues that 1 or more Committees should consider; and

(5) perform all other functions of the Board under this Act and such other related functions as are necessary to perform the functions of the Board.

(e) CONSULTATION.—The Board shall consult as appropriate with the Deputy Attorney General, the Director of NIST, the Director of the National Science Foundation, the Director of the National Institute of Justice, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, senior officials from other relevant Federal agencies including the Department of Defense, and relevant officials of State and local governments.

(f) MEETINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall hold not fewer than 4 meetings of the full Board each year.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) NOTICE.—The Board shall provide public notice of any meeting of the Board in a reasonable period in advance of the meeting.

(B) OPEN MEETINGS.—A meeting of the Board shall be open to the public.

(C) QUORUM.—A majority of the voting members of the Board shall be present for a quorum to conduct business.

(g) VOTES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Decisions of the Board shall be made by an affirmative vote of not less than ⅔ of the members of the Board voting.

(2) VOTING PROCEDURES.—

(A) RECORDED.—All votes of the Board shall be recorded.

(B) REMOTE AND PROXY VOTING.—If necessary, a voting member of the Board may cast a vote—

(i) over the phone or through electronic mail or other electronic means if the vote is scheduled to take place during a time other than a full meeting of the Board; and

(ii) over the phone or by proxy if the vote is scheduled to take place during a full meeting of the Board.

(h) DEFINITION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE DISCIPLINE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall—

(A) develop a recommended definition of the term ''forensic science discipline'' for purposes of this Act, which shall encompass disciplines with a sufficient scientific basis that involve forensic testing, analysis, identification, or comparisons, the results of which may be interpreted, presented, or otherwise used during the course of a criminal investigation or criminal court proceeding;

(B) develop a recommended list of forensic science disciplines for purposes of this Act; and

(C) submit the recommended definition and proposed list of forensic science disciplines to the Director.

(2) CONSIDERATION.—In developing a recommended list of forensic science disciplines under paragraph (1)(B), the Board shall—

(A) consider each field from which courts in criminal cases hear forensic testimony or admit forensic evidence; and

(B) consult with relevant practitioners, experts, and professional organizations.

(3) EXCLUSION FROM LIST.—If the Board recommends that a field should not be included on the list submitted under paragraph (1) because the field has insufficient scientific basis on the date of the recommendation of the Board, the Board shall publish an explanation of the recommendation, which—

(A) shall be published on the Web site of the Board; and

(B) may include a finding that a field could be recognized as a forensic science discipline for purposes of this Act, based on additional research.

(4) ESTABLISHMENT.—After the Director receives the recommendations of the Board under paragraph (1), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), establish a definition for the term ''forensic science discipline'', and shall establish a list of forensic science disciplines.

(5) ANNUAL EVALUATION.—On an annual basis, the Board shall—

(A) evaluate—

(i) whether any field should be added to the list of forensic science disciplines established under paragraph (4), including any field previously excluded; and

(ii) whether any field on the list of forensic science disciplines established under paragraph (4) should be modified or removed; and

(B) submit the evaluation conducted under subparagraph (A), including any recommendations, to the Director.

(i) STAFF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board may, without regard to the civil service laws and regulations, appoint and terminate a staff director and such other additional personnel as may be necessary to enable the Board to perform the duties of the Board.

(2) COMPENSATION.—The Board may fix the compensation of the staff director and other personnel appointed under paragraph (1) without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(3) PERSONNEL AS FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Any personnel of the Board who are employees shall be employees under section 2105 of title 5, United States Code, for purposes of chapters 63, 81, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89, 89A, 89B, and 90 of that title.

(B) MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.—Subparagraph (A) shall not be construed to apply to members of the Board.

(4) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Board may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals which do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(5) VOLUNTARY SERVICES.—Notwithstanding section 1342 of title 31, United States Code, the Board may accept and use voluntary and uncompensated services for the Board as the Board determines necessary.

(j) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 2 years thereafter, the Board shall submit to Congress a report describing the work of the Board and the work of each Committee, which shall include a description of any recommendations, decisions, and other significant materials generated during the 2-year period.

(k) APPLICABILITY OF THE FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) through (4), the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall apply to the Board.

(2) TERMINATION PROVISION.—Section 14(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Board.

(3) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Members of the Board shall serve without compensation for services performed for the Board.

(4) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Board shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Board.

(5) DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER.—In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.), the Director shall—

(A) serve as the designated Federal officer (as described in section 10(e) of such Act); and

(B) designate an Advisory Committee Management Officer (as described in section 8(b) of such Act) for the Board.

(l) TRANSFER AND CONSOLIDATION OF NATIONAL COMMISSION ON FORENSIC SCIENCE.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the first meeting of the Board occurs, the Attorney General or the Director of NIST, as the case may be, shall transfer to the Office, control, supervision, and any unobligated balances available for the operation of the National Commission on Forensic Science or any national commission that has a similar scope or responsibility to the Office.

SEC. 103. COMMITTEES.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF COMMITTEES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall issue recommendations to the Director relating to—

(A) the number of Committees that shall be established to examine research needs, standards and best practices, and certification standards for the forensic science disciplines, which shall be sufficient to—

(i) ensure that the Committees are representative of each forensic science discipline; and

(ii) allow the Committees to function effectively;

(B) the scope of responsibility for each Committee recommended to be established, which shall ensure that each forensic science discipline is addressed by a Committee;

(C) what the relationship should be between the Committees and any scientific working group, scientific area committee, guidance group, or technical working group that has a similar scope of responsibility; and

(D) whether any Committee should consider any field not recognized as a forensic science discipline for the purpose of determining whether there is research that could be conducted and used to form the basis for establishing the field as a forensic science discipline.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—After the Director receives the recommendations of the Board under paragraph (1), the Director, in consultation with the Director of NIST shall—

(A) consider how to adapt and incorporate any scientific working group, scientific area committee, guidance group, or technical working group operating under the Department of Justice or NIST into a Committee;

(B) in accordance with section 101(f)(3), establish—

(i) Committees to examine research needs, standards, best practices, and certification standards for the forensic science disciplines, which shall be not fewer than 1; and

(ii) a clear scope of responsibility for each Committee; and

(C) publish a list of the Committees and the scope of responsibility for each Committee on the Web site for the Office.

(3) ANNUAL EVALUATION.—The Board, on an annual basis, shall—

(A) evaluate whether—

(i) any new Committees should be established;

(ii) the scope of responsibility for any Committee should be modified; and

(iii) any Committee should be discontinued; and

(B) submit any recommendations relating to the evaluation conducted under subparagraph (A) to the Director.

(4) UPDATES.—Upon receipt of any recommendations from the Board under paragraph (3), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), determine whether to establish, modify the scope of, or discontinue any Committee.

(5) TRANSFER AND CONSOLIDATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the first meeting of a Committee occurs, the Attorney General or the Director of NIST, as the case may be, shall transfer to the Office, control, supervision, and any unobligated balances available for the operation of any scientific working group, scientific area committee, guidance group, or technical working group that has a similar scope or responsibility to the Committee.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each Committee shall—

(A) consist of not more than 21 members—

(i) each of whom shall be a scientist with knowledge relevant to a forensic science discipline addressed by the Committee;

(ii) not less than 50 percent of whom shall have extensive experience and background in scientific research; and

(iii) not less than 50 percent of whom shall have extensive practical experience and background in the forensic sciences sufficient to ensure that the Committee has an adequate understanding of the factors and needs unique to the forensic sciences; and

(B) have a membership that represents a variety of scientific disciplines, including the forensic sciences.

(2) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''scientist'' includes—

(A) a statistician with a scientific background; and

(B) a board certified physician or forensic pathologist with expertise in forensic sciences.

(c) APPOINTMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of NIST, in close coordination with the Board and the Director and pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding required under section 101(d), shall appoint the members of each Committee.

(2) CONSIDERATION.—In appointing members to a Committee under paragraph (1), the Director of NIST shall consider—

(A) the importance of analysis from scientists with academic research backgrounds in both basic and applied sciences; and

(B) the importance of input from experienced and actively practicing forensic practitioners, including individuals who participated in scientific working groups, scientific area committees, guidance groups, or technical working groups.

(3) VACANCIES.—In the event of a vacancy, the Director of NIST, in consultation with the Board and the Director, may appoint a member to fill the remainder of the term.

(4) HOLDOVERS.—If a successor has not been appointed at the conclusion of the term of a member of the Committee, the member of the Committee may continue to serve until—

(A) a successor is appointed; or

(B) the member of the Committee is reappointed.

(d) TERMS.—A member of a Committee shall serve for renewable terms of 4 years.

(e) SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding required under section 101(d), the Director of NIST, in consultation with the Director, shall provide support and staff for each Committee as needed.

(2) DUTIES AND OVERSIGHT.—The Director of NIST, in consultation with the Director, shall—

(A) perform periodic oversight of each Committee; and

(B) report any concerns about the performance or functioning of a Committee to the Board and the Director.

(3) FAILURE TO COMPLY.—If a Committee fails to produce recommendations within the time periods required under this Act, the Director of NIST, in consultation with the Director, shall work with the Committee to assist the Committee in producing the required recommendations in a timely manner.

(f) DUTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A Committee shall have the duties and responsibilities set out in this Act, and shall perform any other functions determined appropriate by the Board.

(2) COMMITTEE DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A Committee shall submit recommendations and all recommended standards, protocols, or other materials developed by the Committee to the Board for evaluation.

(B) PROHIBITION OF MODIFICATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Any recommendations of a Committee and any recommended standards, protocols, or other materials developed by a Committee may be approved or disapproved by the Board, but may not be modified by the Board.

(C) APPROVAL OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—If the Board approves a recommendation or recommended standard, protocol, or other material submitted by a Committee under subparagraph (A), the Board shall submit the recommendation or recommended standard, protocol, or other material as a recommendation of the Board, to the Director for consideration in accordance with section 101(f)(3).

(D) DISAPPROVAL OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—If the Board disapproves of any recommendation of a Committee or recommended standard, protocol, or other material developed by a Committee—

(i) the Board shall provide in writing the reason for the disapproval of the recommendation or recommended standard, protocol, or other material;

(ii) the Committee shall withdraw the recommendation or recommended standard, protocol, or other material; and

(iii) the Committee may submit a revised recommendation or recommended standard, protocol, or other material.

(g) MEETINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A Committee shall hold not fewer than 4 meetings of the full Committee each year.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) NOTICE.—A Committee shall provide public notice of any meeting of the Committee a reasonable period in advance of the meeting.

(B) OPEN MEETINGS.—A meeting of a Committee shall be open to the public.

(C) QUORUM.—A majority of members of a Committee shall be present for a quorum to conduct business.

(h) VOTES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Decisions of a Committee shall be made by an affirmative vote of not less than ⅔ of the members of the Committee voting.

(2) VOTING PROCEDURES.—

(A) RECORDED.—All votes taken by a Committee shall be recorded.

(B) REMOTE AND PROXY VOTING.—If necessary, a member of a Committee may cast a vote—

(i) over the phone or through electronic mail if the vote is scheduled to take place during a time other than a full meeting of the Committee; and

(ii) over the phone or by proxy if the vote is scheduled to take place during a full meeting of the Committee.

(i) APPLICABILITY OF THE FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to a Committee.

(2) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Members of a Committee shall serve without compensation for services performed for the Committee.

(3) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of a Committee shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Committee.

SEC. 104. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated, including from any unobligated funds appropriated to the Department of Justice and the National Institute of Standards and Technology for the operation of a scientific working group, scientific area committee, guidance group, or technical working group transferred under section 103(a)(5), and including any unobligated funds appropriated to strengthen and enhance the practice of forensic sciences under any other provision of law, $8,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2019 for the operation and staffing of the Office, Board, and Committees.

TITLE II—ACCREDITATION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORIES

SEC. 201. ACCREDITATION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date established under subsection (b)(2)(E), a forensic science laboratory may not receive, directly or indirectly, any Federal funds, unless the Director has verified that the laboratory has been accredited in accordance with the standards and procedures established under this title.

(b) PROCEDURES FOR ACCREDITATION.—

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall submit to the Director—

(A) a comprehensive strategy to enable forensic science laboratories to obtain and maintain accreditation;

(B) recommended procedures for the accreditation of forensic science laboratories that are consistent with the recommended standards developed by the Board under section 202;

(C) recommended procedures for the periodic review and updating of the accreditation status of forensic science laboratories;

(D) recommended procedures for the Director to verify that laboratories have been accredited in accordance with the standards and procedures established under this title, which shall include procedures to implement, administer, and coordinate enforcement of the program for the accreditation of forensic science laboratories; and

(E) a recommendation regarding the dates by which forensic science laboratories should—

(i) begin the process of laboratory accreditation; and

(ii) obtain verification of laboratory accreditation to be eligible to receive Federal funds.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—After the Director receives the recommendations of the Board under paragraph (1), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), establish—

(A) procedures to implement a comprehensive strategy to enable forensic science laboratories to obtain and maintain accreditation;

(B) procedures for the accreditation of a forensic science laboratory;

(C) procedures for the Director to verify that laboratories have been accredited in accordance with the standards and procedures established under this title;

(D) the date by which a forensic science laboratory shall begin the process of accreditation; and

(E) the date by which a forensic science laboratory shall obtain verification of laboratory accreditation to be eligible to receive Federal funds.

(3) CONSIDERATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In determining, recommending, and establishing the dates under paragraphs (1) and (2), the Board and Director shall consider whether funding has been appropriated pursuant to section 305 and other relevant Federal grant programs to sufficiently assist and support laboratories in obtaining accreditation under this Act.

(c) DEFINITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall recommend to the Director a definition of the term ''forensic science laboratory'' for purposes of this Act, which shall include any laboratory that conducts forensic testing, analysis, identification, or comparisons, the results of which may be interpreted, presented, or otherwise used during the course of a criminal investigation or criminal court proceeding.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—After the Director receives the recommendation of the Board under paragraph (1), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), establish a definition for the term ''forensic science laboratory''.

(d) APPLICABILITY TO FEDERAL AGENCIES.—On and after the date established by the Director under subsection (b)(2)(E), a Federal agency may not use any forensic science laboratory, including any services, products, analysis, opinions, or conclusions provided by the forensic science laboratory, during the course of a criminal investigation or criminal court proceeding unless the forensic science laboratory meets the standards of accreditation and certification established by the Office under this Act.

SEC. 202. STANDARDS FOR LABORATORY ACCREDITATION.

(a) STANDARDS.—

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall, in consultation with qualified professional organizations, submit to the Director recommendations regarding standards for the accreditation of forensic science laboratories, including quality assurance and quality control standards, to ensure the quality, integrity, and accuracy of any testing, analysis, identification, or comparisons performed by a forensic science laboratory for use during the course of a criminal investigation or criminal court proceeding.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—After the Director receives the recommendations of the Board under paragraph (1), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), establish standards for the accreditation of forensic science laboratories.

(3) REQUIREMENTS.—In recommending or establishing standards under paragraph (1) or (2) the Board and the Director shall—

(A) consider—

(i) whether any relevant national or international accreditation standards that were in effect before the date of enactment of this Act would be sufficient for the accreditation of forensic science laboratories under this Act;

(ii) whether any relevant national or international accreditation standards that were in effect before the date of enactment of this Act would be sufficient for the accreditation of forensic science laboratories under this Act with supplemental standards; and

(iii) the incorporation of relevant national or international accreditation standards that were in effect before the date of enactment of this Act; and

(B) include—

(i) educational and training requirements for relevant laboratory personnel;

(ii) proficiency and competency testing requirements for relevant laboratory personnel; and

(iii) maintenance and auditing requirements for accredited forensic science laboratories.

(b) REVIEW OF STANDARDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently than once every 5 years—

(A) the Board shall—

(i) review the scope and effectiveness of the accreditation standards established under subsection (a);

(ii) submit recommendations to the Director relating to whether, and if so, how to update or supplement the standards as necessary to—

(I) account for developments in relevant scientific research, technological advances, and new forensic science disciplines;

(II) ensure adherence to the standards and best practices established under title V; and

(III) address any other issue identified during the course of the review conducted under clause (i); and

(B) the Director shall, as necessary and in accordance with section 101(f)(3), update the accreditation standards established under subsection (a).

(2) PROCEDURES FOR OPEN AND TRANSPARENT REVIEW OF STANDARDS.—The Director, in consultation with the Board, shall establish procedures to ensure that the process for developing, reviewing, and updating accreditation standards under this section—

(A) is open and transparent to the public; and

(B) includes an opportunity for the public to comment on proposed standards with sufficient prior notice.

SEC. 203. ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF ACCREDITATION PROGRAM.

(a) ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT OF ACCREDITATION PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall determine whether a forensic science laboratory is eligible to receive, directly or indirectly, Federal funds under section 201(a).

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall, in consultation with the Board and as appropriate, identify 1 or more qualified accrediting bodies with significant expertise relevant to the accreditation of forensic science laboratories, the accreditation of a forensic science laboratory by which shall constitute accreditation for purposes of section 201(a).

(B) OVERSIGHT.—The Director shall periodically—

(i) reevaluate whether accreditation by a qualified accrediting body identified under subparagraph (A) is adequate to ensure compliance with the standards and procedures established under this title; and

(ii) recommend updates to the standards and procedures used by 1 or more qualified accrediting bodies, as necessary.

(C) REPORTING.—The Director shall provide to the Board, and publish on the Web site of the Office, regular reports regarding—

(i) the accreditation of forensic science laboratories by qualified accrediting bodies identified under subparagraph (A); and

(ii) reevaluations of accreditation by qualified accrediting bodies under subparagraph (B).

(b) REVIEW OF ELIGIBILITY.—Not less frequently than once every 5 years, the Director shall evaluate whether a forensic science laboratory that has been determined to be eligible to receive Federal funds under section 201(a) remains eligible to receive Federal funds, including whether any accreditation of the forensic science laboratory by a qualified accrediting body identified under subparagraph (A) is still in effect.

(c) WEB SITE.—The Director shall develop and maintain on the Web site of the Office an updated list of—

(1) the forensic science laboratories that are eligible for Federal funds under section 201(a);

(2) the forensic science laboratories that have been determined to be ineligible to receive Federal funds under section 201(a); and

(3) the forensic science laboratories that are awaiting a determination regarding eligibility to receive Federal funds under section 201(a).

TITLE III—CERTIFICATION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE PERSONNEL

SEC. 301. DEFINITIONS.

(a) COVERED ENTITY.—In this title, the term ''covered entity'' means an entity that—

(1) is not a forensic science laboratory; and

(2) conducts forensic testing, analysis, investigation, identification, or comparisons, the results of which may be interpreted, presented, or otherwise used during the course of a criminal investigation or criminal court proceeding.

(b) RELEVANT PERSONNEL.—

(1) RECOMMENDATION.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall submit to the Director a recommended definition of the term ''relevant personnel'', which shall include all individuals who—

(A) conduct forensic testing, analysis, investigation, identification, or comparisons, the results of which may be interpreted, presented, or otherwise used during the course of a criminal investigation or criminal court proceeding; or

(B) testify about evidence prepared by an individual described in subparagraph (A).

(2) DEFINITION.—After the Director receives the recommendation of the Board under paragraph (1), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), define the term ''relevant personnel'' for purposes of this title.

SEC. 302. CERTIFICATION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE PERSONNEL.

Except as provided in section 304(c)(2), on and after the date established under section 304(c)(1), a forensic science laboratory or covered entity may not receive, directly or indirectly, any Federal funds, unless all relevant personnel of the forensic science laboratory or covered entity are certified under this title.

SEC. 303. STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION.

(a) RECOMMENDED STANDARDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which all members of a Committee have been appointed, the Committee shall make recommendations to the Board relating to standards for the certification of relevant personnel in each forensic science discipline addressed by the Committee.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In developing recommended standards under paragraph (1), a Committee shall—

(A) consult with qualified professional organizations, including qualified professional organizations that accredit forensic science certification programs;

(B) consider relevant certification standards and best practices developed by qualified professional or scientific organizations;

(C) consider whether successful completion of a certification program accredited by a qualified professional organization would be sufficient to meet the certification requirements for relevant personnel under this Act;

(D) consider whether and under what circumstances internal certification programs by accredited laboratories would be sufficient to meet the certification requirements for relevant personnel under this Act;

(E) consider any standards or best practices established under title V; and

(F) consider—

(i) whether certain minimum standards should be established for the education and training of relevant personnel;

(ii) whether there should be an alternative process to enable relevant personnel who were hired before the date established under section 304(c)(1), to obtain certifications, including—

(I) testing that demonstrates proficiency in a specific forensic science discipline that is equal to or greater than the level of proficiency required by the standards for certification; and

(II) a waiver of certain educational and training requirements;

(iii) whether and under what conditions relevant personnel should be allowed to perform an activity described in subparagraph (A) or (B) of section 301(b)(1) for a forensic science laboratory or covered entity while the individual obtains the training and education required for certification under the standards developed under this title; and

(iv) whether certification by recognized and relevant medical boards, or other recognized and relevant State professional boards, should be sufficient for relevant personnel to meet the standards developed under this title.

(b) APPROVAL OR DENIAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Board shall approve or deny any recommendation submitted by a Committee under subsection (a) in accordance with section 103(f)(2).

(c) ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDS.—After the Director receives recommendations from the Board under subsection (b), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), establish standards for the certification of relevant personnel.

(d) REVIEW OF STANDARDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently than once every 5 years, a Committee shall—

(A) review the standards for certification established under subsection (c) for each forensic science discipline within the responsibility of the Committee; and

(B) submit to the Board recommendations regarding updates, if any, to the standards for certification as necessary—

(i) to account for developments in relevant scientific research, technological advances, or changes in the law; and

(ii) to ensure adherence to the standards and best practices established under title V.

(2) BOARD REVIEW.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which a Committee submits recommendations under paragraph (1)(B), the Board shall, in accordance with section 103(f)(2)—

(A) consider the recommendations; and

(B) submit to the Director recommendations of standards and best practices for each forensic science discipline.

(3) UPDATES.—After the Director receives recommendations from the Board under paragraph (2), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), update the standards for certification of relevant personnel.

(e) PUBLIC COMMENT.—The Director, in consultation with the Board, shall establish procedures to ensure that the process for establishing, reviewing, and updating standards for certification of relevant personnel under this section—

(1) is open and transparent to the public; and

(2) includes an opportunity for the public to comment on proposed standards with sufficient prior notice.

SEC. 304. ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW OF CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) DETERMINATION.—The Director shall determine whether a forensic science laboratory or covered entity is eligible to receive, directly or indirectly, Federal funds under section 302.

(2) PROCEDURES.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall establish policies and procedures to implement, administer, and coordinate enforcement of the certification requirements established under this title, including requiring the periodic recertification of relevant personnel.

(b) ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—After consultation with the Board, the Director may identify 1 or more qualified professional organizations with significant expertise relevant to the certification of individuals in a particular forensic science discipline, the certification of an individual by which shall constitute certification for purposes of section 302.

(2) OVERSIGHT.—The Director shall periodically reevaluate whether certification by a qualified professional organization identified under paragraph (1) is adequate to ensure compliance with the standards established under this title.

(3) REPORTING.—The Director shall provide regular reports to the Board regarding the certification of relevant personnel by qualified professional organizations identified under paragraph (1) and reevaluations of certification by qualified professional organizations under paragraph (2), which shall be published on the Web site of the Office.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—After consultation with the Board, the Director shall establish the date by which forensic science laboratories and covered entities shall be in compliance with the certification requirements of this title.

(2) GRADUAL IMPLEMENTATION.—The Director shall, in consultation with the Board and the relevant Committee, establish policies and procedures to enable the gradual implementation of the certification requirements that—

(A) include a reasonable schedule to allow relevant personnel to obtain certifications;

(B) allow for partial compliance with the requirements of section 302 for a reasonable period of time after the date established under paragraph (1); and

(C) allow for consideration of whether funding has been appropriated pursuant to section 305 and other relevant Federal grant programs to sufficiently assist and support forensic science laboratories and covered entities in complying with the certification requirements of this title.

(d) REVIEW OF CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—The Director shall establish policies and procedures for the periodic review of the implementation, administration, and enforcement of the certification requirements established under this title.

SEC. 305. SUPPORT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR STATE AND LOCAL LABORATORIES.

(a) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Institute of Justice, in consultation with the Director, shall develop a plan for assisting and supporting forensic science laboratories and covered entities in obtaining accreditation under title II and certifications for relevant personnel under this title.

(b) AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF COVERDELL AND BYRNE JAG GRANTS.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Director and the Director of the National Institute of Justice, and consistent with the implementation plan developed under subsection (a), may make grants under part BB of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797j et seq.) and subpart 1 of part E of such Act (42 U.S.C. 3750 et seq.), and provide technical assistance to forensic science laboratories and covered entities, to ensure that forensic science laboratories and covered entities are able to—

(1) obtain accreditation under title II;

(2) obtain certifications for relevant personnel under this title; and

(3) effectively fulfill their responsibilities during the process of obtaining accreditation under title II and certifications for relevant personnel under this title.

(c) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) PAUL COVERDELL FORENSIC SCIENCES IMPROVEMENT GRANTS PROGRAM.—Section 2804(a) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797m(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) To assist forensic science laboratories and covered entities, as those terms are defined in sections 2 and 301, respectively, of the Criminal Justice and Forensic Science Reform Act, in obtaining accreditation under title II of such Act and certifications

for relevant personnel under title III of such Act, in accordance with section 305 of such Act.''.

(2) EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM.—Section 501(a)(1) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3751(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(H) Assistance to forensic science laboratories and covered entities, as those terms are defined in sections 2 and 301, respectively, of the Criminal Justice and Forensic Science Reform Act, in obtaining accreditation under title II of such Act and certifications for relevant personnel under title III of such Act, in accordance with section 305 of such Act.''.

TITLE IV—RESEARCH

SEC. 401. RESEARCH STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES.

(a) COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH STRATEGY AND AGENDA.—

(1) RECOMMENDATION.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall recommend to the Director a comprehensive strategy for fostering and improving peer-reviewed scientific research relating to the forensic science disciplines, including research addressing issues of validity, reliability, and accuracy in the forensic science disciplines.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—After the Director receives recommendations from the Board under paragraph (1), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), establish a comprehensive strategy for fostering and improving peer-reviewed scientific research relating to the forensic science disciplines.

(3) REVIEW.—

(A) BOARD REVIEW.—Not less frequently than once every 5 years, the Board shall—

(i) review the comprehensive strategy established under paragraph (2); and

(ii) recommend any necessary updates to the comprehensive strategy.

(B) UPDATES.—After the Director receives recommendations from the Board under subparagraph (A), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), update the comprehensive strategy as necessary and appropriate.

(b) RESEARCH FUNDING PRIORITIES.—

(1) RECOMMENDATION.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall recommend to the Director a list of priorities for forensic science research funding.

(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—After the Director receives the list from the Board under paragraph (1), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), establish a list of priorities for forensic science research funding.

(3) REVIEW.—Not less frequently than once every 2 years, the Board shall—

(A) review—

(i) the list of priorities established under paragraph (2); and

(ii) the findings of the relevant Committees made under subsection (c); and

(B) recommend any necessary updates to the list of priorities, incorporating, as appropriate, the findings of the Committees under subsection (c).

(4) UPDATES.—After the Director receives the recommendations under paragraph (3), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), update as necessary the list of research funding priorities.

(c) EVALUATION OF RESEARCH NEEDS.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which all members of a Committee have been appointed under section 103, and periodically thereafter, the Committee shall—

(1) examine and evaluate the scientific research in each forensic science discipline within the responsibility of the Committee;

(2) conduct comprehensive surveys of scientific research relating to each forensic science discipline within the responsibility of the Committee;

(3) examine the research needs in each forensic science discipline within the responsibility of the Committee and identify key areas in which further scientific research is needed; and

(4) develop and submit to the Board a list of research needs and priorities.

(d) CONSIDERATION.—In developing the initial research strategy, research priorities, and surveys required under this section, the Board and the Director shall consider any findings, surveys, and analyses relating to research in forensic science disciplines, including those made by the Subcommittee on Forensic Science of the National Science and Technology Council.

SEC. 402. RESEARCH GRANTS.

(a) COMPETITIVE GRANTS.—

(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''eligible entity'' means—

(A) a nonprofit academic or research institution;

(B) an accredited forensic science laboratory; and

(C) any other entity designated by the Director of NIST.

(2) PEER-REVIEW RESEARCH GRANTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding required under section 101(d), the Director of NIST may, on a competitive basis and using funds appropriated to NIST for forensic science purposes, make grants to eligible entities to conduct peer-reviewed scientific research.

(B) CONSIDERATION.—In making grants under this paragraph, the Director of NIST shall—

(i) ensure that the grants are made for peer-reviewed scientific research in areas that are consistent with the research priorities established by the Director under section 401(b);

(ii) take into consideration the research needs identified by the Committees under section 401(c);

(iii) if made before the identification of research priorities under section 401(b) and research needs under section 401(c), consider any findings, surveys, and analyses relating to research in forensic science disciplines, including those made by the Subcommittee on Forensic Science of the National Science and Technology Council; and

(iv) encourage and, if appropriate, provide incentives for partnerships between nonprofit academic or research institutions and accredited forensic science laboratories.

(3) DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES.—Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding required under section 101(d), the Director of NIST may, on a competitive basis, make grants to eligible entities to conduct peer-reviewed scientific research to develop new technologies and processes to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and accuracy of forensic testing procedures.

(4) COORDINATION WITH DIRECTOR.—In making grants under this subsection, the Director of NIST shall coordinate with the Director to ensure implementation of the plan established under section 404.

(5) COORDINATION WITH THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.—The Director of NIST shall consult and coordinate with the National Science Foundation to ensure—

(A) the integrity of the process for reviewing funding proposals and awarding grants under this subsection; and

(B) that the grant-making process is not subject to any undue bias or influence.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) SUBMISSION.—The Director of NIST shall, on an annual basis, submit to the Board and the Director a report that describes—

(i) the application process for grants under this section;

(ii) each grant made under this section in the fiscal year before the report is submitted; and

(iii) as appropriate, the status and results of grants previously described in a report submitted under this subsection.

(B) PUBLICATION.—The Director shall publish the report submitted under subparagraph (A) on the Web site of the Office.

(2) EVALUATION.—The Board and the Director shall evaluate each report submitted under paragraph (1) and consider the information provided in each report in reviewing the research strategy and priorities established under section 401.

SEC. 403. OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which the first grant is awarded under paragraph (2) or (3) of section 402(a), and not later than 2 years after the date on which the first report under section 402(b) is submitted, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice, in coordination with the Inspector General of the Department of Commerce, shall submit to Congress a report on the administration and effectiveness of the grant programs described in section 402(a).

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall evaluate—

(1) whether any undue biases or influences affected the integrity of the solicitation, award, or administration of research grants; and

(2) whether there was any unnecessary duplication, waste, fraud, or abuse in the grant-making process.

SEC. 404. PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION.

(a) RECOMMENDATION.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall submit to the Director a recommended plan for encouraging collaboration among universities, nonprofit research institutions, State and local forensic science laboratories, private forensic science laboratories, private corporations, and the Federal Government to develop and perform cost-effective and reliable research in the forensic sciences, consistent with the research priorities established under section 401(b)(2).

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The plan recommended under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) incentives for nongovernmental entities to invest significant resources into conducting necessary research in the forensic sciences;

(2) procedures for ensuring the research described in paragraph (1) will be conducted with sufficient scientific rigor that the research can be relied upon by—

(A) the Committees in developing standards under this Act; and

(B) forensic science personnel; and

(3) clearly defined requirements for disclosure of the sources of funding by nongovernmental entities for forensic science research conducted in collaboration with governmental entities and safeguards to prevent conflicts of interest or undue bias or influence.

(c) ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.—After receiving the recommended plan of the Board under subsection (a), the Director shall establish, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), and implement a plan for encouraging collaboration among universities, nonprofit research institutions, State and local forensic science laboratories, private forensic science laboratories, private corporations, and the Federal Government to develop and perform cost-effective and reliable research in the forensic sciences, consistent with the research priorities established under section 401(b)(2).

(d) OVERSIGHT.—The Director, in consultation with the Board, shall periodically evaluate and, as necessary, update the plan established under subsection (c).

TITLE V—STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES

SEC. 501. DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES.

(a) COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date on which all members of a Committee have been appointed under section 103, the Committee shall develop and recommend to the Board standards and best practices for each forensic science discipline addressed by the Committee, including—

(A) validated protocols;

(B) quality assurance standards; and

(C) standards to be applied in reporting, including reports of identifications, analyses, or comparisons of forensic evidence that may be used during a criminal investigation or criminal court proceeding.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In developing the standards and best practices under paragraph (1), a Committee shall—

(A) as appropriate, consult with qualified professional organizations;

(B) consider existing validated protocols and best practices;

(C) develop standards and best practices that are designed to ensure the quality and scientific integrity of data, results, conclusions, analyses, and reports that are generated for use in the criminal justice system; and

(D) develop standards and best practices that afford laboratories appropriate operational flexibility, including appropriate flexibility as to specific instruments, equipment, and methods.

(b) BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which a Committee submits recommended standards and best practices under subsection (a), the Board shall, in accordance with section 103(f)(2)—

(1) consider the recommendations; and

(2) submit to the Director recommendations of standards and best practices.

SEC. 502. ESTABLISHMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF STANDARDS AND BEST PRACTICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—After the Board submits standards or best practices for a forensic science discipline under section 501(b), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), establish and disseminate standards and best practices for the forensic science discipline.

(b) PUBLICATION.—The Director shall publish the standards and best practices established under subsection (a) on the Web site of the Office.

SEC. 503. REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT.

(a) REVIEW BY COMMITTEES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently than once every 3 years, each Committee shall review and, as necessary, recommend to the Board updates to the standards and best practices established under section 502 for each forensic science discipline within the responsibility of the Committee.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In reviewing, and developing recommended updates to, the standards and best practices under paragraph (1), a Committee shall consider—

(A) input from qualified professional organizations;

(B) research published after the date on which the standards and best practices were established, including research conducted under title IV; and

(C) any changes to relevant law made after the date on which the standards and best practices were established.

(b) BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which a Committee submits recommended updates to the standards and best practices under subsection (a), the Board shall, in accordance with section 103(f)(2)—

(1) consider the recommendations; and

(2) recommend to the Director any updates, as necessary, to the standards and best practices established under section 502.

(c) UPDATES.—After the Director receives recommended updates, if any, under subsection (b), the Director shall, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), update and disseminate the standards and best practices for each forensic science discipline as necessary.

(d) PROCEDURES.—The Director, in consultation with the Board, shall establish procedures to ensure that the process for developing, reviewing, and updating the standards and best practices—

(1) is open and transparent to the public; and

(2) includes an opportunity for the public to comment on proposed standards with sufficient prior notice.

TITLE VI—ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE OF FORENSIC SCIENCE AND THE FORENSIC SCIENCE BOARD

SEC. 601. FORENSIC SCIENCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR JUDGES, ATTORNEYS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) RECOMMENDATION.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall submit to the Director a recommended plan for—

(A) supporting the education and training of judges, attorneys, and law enforcement personnel in the forensic sciences and fundamental scientific principles, which shall include education on the competent use and evaluation of forensic science evidence; and

(B) developing a standardized curriculum for education and training described in subparagraph (A).

(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—Upon receipt of the recommendation from the Board under paragraph (1), the Director shall establish, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), and implement a plan for—

(A) supporting the education and training of judges, attorneys, and law enforcement personnel in the forensic sciences and fundamental scientific principles, which shall include education on the competent use and evaluation of forensic science evidence; and

(B) developing a standardized curriculum for education and training described in subparagraph (A).

(3) OVERSIGHT.—The Director, in consultation with the Board, shall periodically evaluate and, as necessary, update the plan established under paragraph (2).

(b) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING, AND EDUCATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National Institute of Justice may, in consultation with the Director—

(A) provide technical assistance directly or indirectly to judges, attorneys, and law enforcement personnel in the forensic sciences and fundamental scientific principles, including the competent use and evaluation of forensic science evidence; and

(B) make grants to States and units of local government and nonprofit organizations or institutions to provide training to judges, attorneys, and law enforcement personnel about the forensic sciences and fundamental scientific principles, including the competent use and evaluation of forensic science evidence.

(2) REQUIREMENT.—On and after the date on which the Director establishes the plan for supporting the education and training of judges, attorneys, and law enforcement personnel in the forensic sciences and fundamental scientific principles under subsection (a)(2), the Director of the National Institute of Justice shall administer the grant program described in paragraph (1) in accordance with the plan.

SEC. 602. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE FORENSIC SCIENCES.

(a) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall submit to the Director—

(1) a recommended plan for supporting the development of undergraduate and graduate educational programs in the forensic science disciplines and related fields; and

(2) recommendations as to whether the development of standards or requirements for educational programs in the forensic science disciplines and related fields is appropriate.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.—Upon receipt of the recommendation from the Board under subsection (a), the Director shall establish, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), and implement—

(1) a plan for supporting the development of undergraduate and graduate educational programs in the forensic science disciplines and related fields; and

(2) any standards or requirements for education programs in the forensic science disciplines and related fields determined by the Director to be appropriate.

(c) EXISTING QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.—In recommending, establishing, and implementing the plan and standards described in subsections (a) and (b), the Board and the Director shall consider the role of qualified professional organizations that accredit forensic science education programs, and any standards developed by such qualified professional organizations.

(d) OVERSIGHT.—The Director, in consultation with the Board, shall—

(1) oversee the implementation of any standards or requirements established under subsection (b); and

(2) periodically evaluate and, as necessary, update the plan, standards, or requirements established under subsection (b).

SEC. 603. MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATION.

(a) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall submit to the Director—

(1) a recommended plan to encourage the Federal Government and State and local governments to implement systems to ensure that qualified individuals perform medicolegal death investigations and to encourage qualified individuals to enter the field of medicolegal death investigation; and

(2) recommendations on whether and how the requirements, standards and regulations established under this Act should apply to individuals who perform medicolegal death investigations.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.—Upon receipt of the recommendations from the Board under subsection (a), the Director shall establish, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), and implement—

(1) a plan to encourage the Federal Government and State and local governments to implement systems to ensure that qualified individuals perform medicolegal death investigations and to encourage qualified individuals to enter the field of medicolegal death investigation; and

(2) any specific or additional standards or requirements for individuals who perform medicolegal death investigations determined by the Director to be appropriate.

(c) OVERSIGHT.—The Director, in consultation with the Board, shall—

(1) oversee the implementation of any standards or requirements established under subsection (b)(2); and

(2) periodically evaluate and, as necessary, update the plan, standards, and requirements established under subsection (b).

SEC. 604. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION.

The Board and the Director shall regularly—

(1) coordinate with relevant Federal agencies, including NIST, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Defense, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Institutes of Health, as appropriate, to make efficient and appropriate use of research expertise and funding;

(2) coordinate with the Department of Homeland Security and other relevant Federal agencies to determine ways in which the forensic science disciplines may assist in homeland security and emergency preparedness; and

(3) coordinate with the United States intelligence community to make efficient and appropriate use of research and new technologies suitable for forensic science.

SEC. 605. ANONYMOUS REPORTING.

Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall develop a system for any individual to provide information relating to compliance, or lack of compliance, with the requirements, standards, and regulations established under this Act, which may include a hotline or Web site that has appropriate guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality and protections for whistleblowers.

SEC. 606. INTEROPERABILITY OF DATABASES AND TECHNOLOGIES.

(a) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall submit to the Director a recommended plan to require interoperability among databases and technologies in each of the forensic science disciplines among all levels of Government, in all States, and where permitted by law, with the private sector.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.—Upon receipt of the recommendation from the Board under subsection (a), the Director shall establish, in accordance with section 101(f)(3), and implement a plan to encourage interoperability among databases and technologies in each of the forensic science disciplines among all levels of Government, in all States, and where permitted by law, with the private sector.

(c) OVERSIGHT.—The Director, in consultation with the Board, shall evaluate and, as necessary, update the plan established under subsection (b).

SEC. 607. CODE OF ETHICS.

(a) RECOMMENDATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall submit to the Director a recommended code of ethics for the forensic science disciplines.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In developing a recommended code of ethics under paragraph (1), the Board shall—

(A) consult with relevant qualified professional organizations; and

(B) consider any recommendations relating to a code of ethics or code of professional responsibility developed by the Subcommittee on Forensic Science of the National Science and Technology Council.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT AND INCORPORATION.—Upon receipt of the recommendation from the Board under subsection (a), the Director shall—

(1) in accordance with section 101(f)(3), establish a code of ethics for the forensic science disciplines; and

(2) as appropriate, incorporate the code of ethics into the standards for accreditation of forensic science laboratories and certification of relevant personnel established under this Act.

(c) OVERSIGHT.—The Director, in consultation with the Board, shall periodically evaluate and, as necessary, update the code of ethics established under subsection (b).

SEC. 608. NEEDS ASSESSMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall conduct a needs assessment of State and local forensic service providers, including law enforcement agencies and medicolegal death examiners, in order to evaluate the capacity and resource needs of those providers. Such a needs assessment shall address the technology, equipment, personnel, recruitment, training, education, and research needs of those State and local forensic service providers.

(b) DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL STRATEGY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall develop a national strategy for developing the capacity and resources of State and local forensic science providers and for addressing the needs identified in the assessment conducted pursuant to subsection (a).

(c) UPDATE OF ASSESSMENT AND NATIONAL STRATEGY.—Not less frequently than once every 5 years, the Director shall update the assessment conducted under subsection (a) and the national strategy developed under subsection (b).

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. 2183. A bill entitled ''United States International Programming to Ukraine and Neighboring Regions'' ; considered and passed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. 2183

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS.

(a) Congress finds and declares the following:

(1) The Russian Government has deliberately blocked the Ukrainian people's access to uncensored sources of information and has provided alternative news and information that is both inaccurate and inflammatory.

(2) United States international programming exists to advance the United States interests and values by presenting accurate and comprehensive news and information, which is the foundation for democratic governance.

(3) The opinions and views of the Ukrainian people, especially those people located in the eastern regions and Crimea, are not being accurately represented in Russian dominated mass media.

(4) Russian forces have seized more than five television stations in Crimea and taken over transmissions, switching to a 24/7 Russian propaganda format; this increase in programming augments the already robust pro-Russian programming to Ukraine.

(5) United States international programming has the potential to combat this anti-democratic propaganda.

(b) PROGRAMMING.—Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Incorporated, and the Voice of America service to Ukraine and neighboring regions shall—

(1) provide news and information that is accessible, credible, and accurate;

(2) emphasize investigative and analytical journalism to highlight inconsistencies and misinformation provided by Russian or pro-Russian media outlets;

(3) prioritize programming to areas where access to uncensored sources of information is limited or non-existent, especially populations serviced by Russian supported media outlets;

(4) increase the number of reporters and organizational presence in eastern Ukraine, especially in Crimea;

(5) promote democratic processes, respect for human rights, freedom of the press, and territorial sovereignty; and

(6) take necessary preparatory steps to continue and increase programming and content that promotes democracy and government transparency in Russia.

(c) PROGRAMMING SURGE.—RFE/RL, Incorporated, and Voice of America programming to Ukraine and neighboring regions shall—

(1) prioritize programming to eastern Ukraine, including Crimea, and Moldova, and to ethnic and linguistic Russian populations, as well as to Tatar minorities;

(2) prioritize news and information that directly contributes to the target audiences' understanding of political and economic developments in Ukraine and Moldova, including countering misinformation that may originate from other news outlets, especially Russian supported news outlets;

(3) provide programming content 24 hours a day, seven days a week to target populations, using all available and effective distribution outlets, including—

(A) at least 8 weekly hours of total original television and video content in Ukrainian, Russian, and Tatar languages, not inclusive of live video streaming coverage of breaking news, to be distributed on satellite, digital, and through regional television affiliates by the Voice of America; and

(B) at least 14 weekly hours the total audio content in Ukrainian, Russian, and Tatar languages to be distributed on satellite, digital, and through regional radio affiliates of RFE/RL, Incorporated;

(4) expand the use, audience, and audience engagement of mobile news and multimedia platforms by RFE/RL, Incorporated, and the Voice of America, including through Internet-based social networking platforms; and

(5) partner with private sector broadcasters and affiliates to seek and start co-production for new, original content, when possible, to increase distribution.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2014, in addition to funds otherwise made available for such purposes, up to $10,000,000 to carry out programming in the Ukrainian, Balkan, Russian, and Tatar language services of RFE/RL, Incorporated, and the Voice of America, for the purpose of bolstering existing United States programming to the people of Ukraine and neighboring regions, and increasing programming capacity and jamming circumvention technology to overcome any disruptions to service.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Broadcasting Board of Governors shall submit to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Foreign Relations and Appropriations of the Senate a detailed report on plans to increase broadcasts pursuant to subsections (a) and (b).

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. COATS):

S.J. Res. 35. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service of the Department of the Treasury relating to liability under section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for the

shared responsibility payment for not maintaining minimum essential coverage; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the joint resolution be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the joint resolution was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S.J. RES. 35

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service of the Department of the Treasury relating to liability under section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 for the shared responsibility payment for not maintaining minimum essential coverage (published at 78 Fed. Reg. 53646 (August 30, 2013)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 400—RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT ALASKA EARTHQUAKE, WHICH STRUCK THE STATE OF ALASKA AT 5:36 P.M. ON GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 1964, HONORING THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT ALASKA EARTHQUAKE AND ASSOCIATED TSUNAMIS, AND EXPRESSING CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH ON EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI PREDICTION AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 400

Whereas on Good Friday, March 27, 1964, the Great Alaska Earthquake struck the State of Alaska;

Whereas the Great Alaska Earthquake measured 9.2 on the moment magnitude scale, making it the largest recorded earthquake in United States history and the second-largest earthquake ever recorded using modern instruments;

Whereas the Great Alaska Earthquake was felt as far away as Seattle and was registered by water-level recorders in 47 States;

Whereas the Great Alaska Earthquake spawned tsunamis that devastated communities in Alaska and impacted the States of Washington, Oregon, California, and Hawaii, as well as Canada and Japan;

Whereas the Great Alaska Earthquake and associated tsunamis resulted in 131 fatalities, including 4 fatalities in Oregon and 12 fatalities in California, and an estimated $3,750,000,000 in property losses in today's dollars;

Whereas the wealth of data collected during the Great Alaska Earthquake led to major breakthroughs in the scientific understanding of subduction zone earthquakes and earthquake hazards, resulting in improved earthquake mitigation strategies;

Whereas the study of the tsunamis associated with the Great Alaska Earthquake resulted in improved tsunami prediction and warning capabilities; and

Whereas the Great Alaska Earthquake spurred the United States Geological Survey, in cooperation with earthquake-impacted States, to install extensive earthquake monitoring networks across the United States and establish the National Center for Earthquake Research: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) mourns the lives lost due to the Great Alaska Earthquake and associated tsunamis that occurred on Good Friday, March 27, 1964;

(2) recognizes the improved understanding of earthquakes and tsunamis and the scientific and technological advancements that resulted from the study of data collected during the Great Alaska Earthquake;

(3) commends the efforts of scientists and engineers from the United States Geological Survey, as well as those in Alaska, California, and other earthquake-impacted States, to improve earthquake and tsunami prediction and hazard mitigation strategies and protect the well-being of United States citizens threatened by these hazards;

(4) supports continued research, education, and outreach about earthquakes and other natural hazards; and

(5) encourages participation in the Great Alaska ShakeOut earthquake drill scheduled to occur on March 27, 2014.

SENATE RESOLUTION 401—RECOGNIZING EASY COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION OF THE 506TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT OF THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. CASEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 401

Whereas Easy Company, 2nd Battalion comprised part of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division of the United States Army;

Whereas Easy Company was immortalized by the heroic actions of its soldiers during World War II;

Whereas the book and miniseries, ''Band of Brothers'', introduces a new generation of people of the United States to the valorous deeds of Easy Company;

Whereas Easy Company engaged in critical combat missions during World War II, including the Battle of Normandy, Operation Market Garden, the Battle of Bastogne, and the Allied capture of Hitler's Eagles Nest;

Whereas Easy Company was originally comprised of 140 soldiers, 12 of whom were natives of the State of Pennsylvania;

Whereas the Pennsylvania heroes who helped to form Easy Company were Richard D. ''Dick'' Winters, Thomas Meehan III, Harry F. Welsh, Jack Edward Foley, Joseph D. Toye, William J. Guarnere, Forrest L. Guth, Edward James Heffron, Albert Blithe, Carl L. Fenstermaker, Roderick G. Strohl, and Joseph A. Lesniewski;

Whereas Easy Company lost 49 soldiers, including Thomas Meehan III, who paid the ultimate price for freedom during World War II; and

Whereas with the passing of William J. Guarnere, also known as ''Wild Bill'', on March 8, 2014, all of the Pennsylvania natives who served in Easy Company, except for Roderick G. Strohl, have passed away: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes—

(1) the impact of Easy Company and the bravery of all of the heroes who have served in the company; and

(2) the brave Pennsylvania natives who served in Easy Company.

SENATE RESOLUTION 402—EXPRESSING THE REGRET OF THE SENATE FOR THE PASSAGE OF SECTION 3 OF THE EXPATRIATION ACT OF 1907 (34 STAT. 1228) THAT REVOKED THE UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP OF WOMEN WHO MARRIED FOREIGN NATIONALS

Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 402

Whereas throughout the history of the United States, women have made and continue to make invaluable contributions to society that strengthen the political, social, and economic fabric of the Nation and improve the lives of countless individuals;

Whereas women in the United States have been and continue to be leaders in promoting justice and equality during times of great difficulty for the Nation;

Whereas women in the United States have played a pivotal role in ensuring freedom and security in the United States;

Whereas section 3 of the Expatriation Act of 1907 (34 Stat. 1228) left thousands of women born in the United States, such as Elsie Knutson Moren from Minnesota and Theresa Rosella Schwan from Wisconsin, stateless and without a nationality after marrying a foreign national;

Whereas section 3 of the Expatriation Act of 1907 caused thousands of United States women, such as Lorella Martorana from Pennsylvania who lost her citizenship and was not able to vouch for her husband during his naturalization proceedings, and Lena Weide Demke from South Dakota who lost her citizenship and was almost deported during World War I, to have their loyalties questioned, face harassment, and be subject to deportation for various legal infractions;

Whereas section 3 of the Expatriation Act of 1907 affected numerous women, such as Florence Bain Gual, a New York City school teacher whose tenure was stripped after 15 years of teaching because she married a foreign national, causing them to face difficulties providing for their families because they lost, or were not able to gain, public employment after marrying a foreign national;

Whereas section 3 of the Expatriation Act of 1907 prevented women in the United States, such as Ethel MacKenzie from California who was unable to register to vote because she married a foreign national, from participating in the political process and casting ballots in various elections;

Whereas section 3 of the Expatriation Act of 1907 is similar to discriminatory State laws that criminalized or nullified marriages between individuals of different races;

Whereas the revocation of citizenship restricted the ability of numerous women in the United States to own houses and real estate;

Whereas an acknowledgment of the actions of the Senate that have contributed to discrimination against women will not erase the past, but will highlight the injustices of the national experience and help build a better, stronger, and more equal Nation; and

Whereas the Senate recognizes the importance of addressing the error of section 3 of the Expatriation Act of 1907 in order to educate the public and future generations regarding the impact of this law on women and to prevent a similar law from being enacted in the future: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges that section 3 of the Expatriation Act of 1907 (34 Stat. 1228) is incompatible with and antithetical to the core principle that all persons, regardless of gender, race, religion, or ethnicity, are created equal;

(2) expresses sincere sympathy and regret to the descendants of individuals whose citizenship was revoked under section 3 of the Expatriation Act of 1907, who suffered injustice, humiliation, and inequality, and who were deprived of constitutional protections accorded to all citizens of the United States; and

(3) reaffirms the commitment to preserving civil rights and constitutional protections for all people of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 403—CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY IN RESTRICTING FREE EXPRESSION AND INTERNET FREEDOM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 403

Whereas an independent, unfettered media and freedom of expression, including on the Internet and social media sites, are essential elements of democratic, open societies;

Whereas infringement of press freedom in Turkey is a serious concern, with more journalists currently imprisoned in Turkey than in any other country;

Whereas millions of people in Turkey, including senior members of the Government of Turkey, use Twitter and other social media sites to communicate on a daily basis;

Whereas the Government of Turkey imposed a country-wide ban on access to Twitter on March 20, 2014, blocking the use of the communications platform to engage in political speech;

Whereas respected nongovernmental organizations such as Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders, and Freedom House have condemned the decision to block Twitter as an attack on Internet freedom and freedom of expression in Turkey;

Whereas the President of Turkey, Abdullah Gul, defied the ban to send out a series of tweets questioning the government's actions;

Whereas the Turkish Bar Association argued that the ban is unconstitutional and in violation of Turkish and European human rights laws; and

Whereas, on March 26, 2014, the district court in Ankara, Turkey, blocked implementation of the ban because it may restrict the freedoms of expression and communication, which are protected by the Turkish Constitution and the European Convention of Human Rights: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of Turkey's restrictions on freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and Internet freedom;

(2) recognizes the critical role that technology and social media sites play in helping independent journalists and the general public to communicate and access information;

(3) reaffirms the centrality of Internet freedom to efforts by the United States Government to support democracy and promote good governance around the world; and

(4) calls on the Government of Turkey to immediately end its restrictions on media freedom, including social media, and restore access to Twitter.

SENATE RESOLUTION 404—HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LEGACY OF CESAR ESTRADA CHAVEZ

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. REID, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BENNET, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. WARREN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 404

Whereas César Estrada Chávez was born on March 31, 1927, near Yuma, Arizona;

Whereas César Estrada Chávez spent his early years on a family farm;

Whereas at the age of 10, César Estrada Chávez joined the thousands of migrant farm workers laboring in fields and vineyards throughout the Southwest after a bank foreclosure resulted in the loss of the family farm;

Whereas César Estrada Chávez, after attending more than 30 elementary and middle schools and achieving an eighth grade education, left school to work full-time as a farm worker to help support his family;

Whereas at the age of 17, César Estrada Chávez entered the United States Navy and served the United States with distinction for 2 years;

Whereas in 1948, César Estrada Chávez returned from military service to marry Helen Fabela, whom he had met while working in the vineyards of central California;

Whereas César Estrada Chávez and Helen Fabela had 8 children;

Whereas as early as 1949, César Estrada Chávez was committed to organizing farm workers to campaign for safe and fair working conditions, reasonable wages, livable housing, and outlawing child labor;

Whereas in 1952, César Estrada Chávez joined the Community Service Organization, a prominent Latino civil rights group, and worked with the organization to coordinate voter registration drives and conduct campaigns against discrimination in East Los Angeles;

Whereas César Estrada Chávez served as the national director of the Community Service Organization;

Whereas in 1962, César Estrada Chávez left the Community Service Organization to establish the National Farm Workers Association, which eventually became the United Farm Workers of America;

Whereas under the leadership of César Estrada Chávez, the United Farm Workers of America organized thousands of migrant farm workers to fight for fair wages, health care coverage, pension benefits, livable housing, and respect;

Whereas César Estrada Chávez was a strong believer in the principles of nonviolence practiced by Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;

Whereas César Estrada Chávez effectively used peaceful tactics that included fasting for 25 days in 1968, 25 days in 1972, and 38 days in 1988 to call attention to the terrible working and living conditions of farm workers in the United States;

Whereas through his commitment to nonviolence, César Estrada Chávez brought dignity and respect to organized farm workers and became an inspiration to and a resource for individuals engaged in human rights struggles throughout the world;

Whereas the influence of César Estrada Chávez extends far beyond agriculture and provides inspiration for individuals working to better human rights, empower workers, and advance the American Dream, which includes all individuals of the United States;

Whereas César Estrada Chávez died on April 23, 1993, at the age of 66 in San Luis, Arizona, only miles from his birthplace;

Whereas more than 50,000 people attended the funeral services of César Estrada Chávez in Delano, California;

Whereas César Estrada Chávez was laid to rest at the headquarters of the United Farm Workers of America, known as Nuestra Señora de La Paz, located in the Tehachapi Mountains in Keene, California;

Whereas since the death of César Estrada Chávez, schools, parks, streets, libraries, and other public facilities, as well as awards and scholarships, have been named in his honor;

Whereas more than 10 States and dozens of communities across the United States honor the life and legacy of César Estrada Chávez each year on March 31;

Whereas March 31 is recognized as an official State holiday in California, Colorado, and Texas, and there is growing support to designate the birthday of César Estrada Chávez as a national day of service to memorialize his heroism;

Whereas during his lifetime, César Estrada Chávez was a recipient of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Prize;

Whereas on August 8, 1994, César Estrada Chávez was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom;

Whereas on October 8, 2012, President Barack Obama authorized the Secretary of the Interior to establish a César Estrada Chávez National Monument in Keene, California;

Whereas President Barack Obama honored the life and service of César Estrada Chávez by proclaiming March 31, 2013, to be ''César Chávez Day'' and by asking all people of the United States to observe March 31 with service, community, and education programs to honor the enduring legacy of César Estrada Chávez; and

Whereas the United States should continue the efforts of César Estrada Chávez to ensure equality, justice, and dignity for all people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the accomplishments and example of César Estrada Chávez, a great hero of the United States;

(2) pledges to promote the legacy of César Estrada Chávez; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to commemorate the legacy of César Estrada Chávez and to always remember his great rallying cry: ''¡Sí, se puede!'', which is Spanish for ''Yes, we can!''.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2871. Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2124, to support sovereignty and democracy in Ukraine, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2872. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2867 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. CORKER)) to the bill H.R. 4152, to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2873. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2867 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. CORKER)) to the bill H.R. 4152, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2871. Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin submitted an amendment intended to

be proposed by him to the bill S. 2124, to support sovereignty and democracy in Ukraine, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 5, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

(10) to support reform efforts by the Government of Ukraine to enact legislation related to greater accountability for government officials, procurement, protection of private property, protection of classified information and military equipment, and transparency of government funds;

On page 9, line 22, insert after ''Ukraine'' the following: '', including greater accountability for government officials, procurement, protection of private property, protection of classified information and military equipment, and transparency of government funds''.

On page 13, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

(c) LIMITATION.—None of the amounts authorized to be appropriated under this section may be obligated or expended for assistance to the Government of Ukraine for fiscal years 2016 or 2017 until the Secretary of State certifies that the Government of Ukraine has made sufficient progress in enacting anti-corruption legislation relating to greater accountability for government officials, procurement, protection of private property, protection of classified information and military equipment, and transparency of government funds.

On page 15, lines 3 and 4, insert ''or the Government of Ukraine'' after ''official of the Government of the Russian Federation''.

SA 2872. Mr. MERKLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2867 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. CORKER)) to the bill H.R. 4152, to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 10 of the amendment, strike lines 5 through 9 and insert the following:

(4) assist in diversifying Ukraine's economy, trade, and energy supplies (including through the use of energy efficiency measures), including at the national, regional, and local levels;

(5) strengthen democratic institutions and political and civil society organizations in Ukraine, including through exchanges and collaborations with sister city and partner civil society organizations in the United States;

SA 2873. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2867 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. CORKER)) to the bill H.R. 4152, to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the amendment, add the following:

SEC. 11. TERMINATION OF GLOBAL SECURITY THROUGH SCIENCE PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Effective on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Global Security through Science Partnerships program of the Department of Energy is terminated.

(b) TRANSFER OF CRITICAL FUNCTIONS.—If, before the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Energy, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, determines that any function of the Global Security through Science Partnerships program is critical to the national security of the United States, and the Comptroller General of the United States certifies that such function is critical and is not being carried out by any other agency or instrumentality of the Federal Government, the Secretary may transfer the responsibility for such function to another office within the Department of Energy.

(c) TERMINATION OF FUNCTIONS.—All functions of the Global Security through Science Partnerships program, other than any functions transferred pursuant to subsection (b), are terminated effective on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) RESCISSION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all unobligated Federal funds available for the Global Security through Science Partnerships program in appropriated discretionary unexpired funds are rescinded.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO OBJECT TO PROCEEDING

I, Senator CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of Carolyn Hessler Radelet, to be the Director of the Peace Corps, dated March 27, 2014.

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 on April 1, 2014, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Access to Justice: Ensuring Equal Pay with the Paycheck Fairness Act.''

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Sarah Cupp of the committee staff on (202) 224–5363.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 9, 2014, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Indian Education Series: Indian Students in Public Schools—Cultivating the Next Generation.''

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at (202) 224–2251.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 27, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 27, 2014, at 9:45 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, on March 27, 2014, at 9:45 a.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''MAP–21 Reauthorization: State and Local Perspectives on Transportation Priorities and Funding.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, on March 27, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Strengthening the Federal Student Loan Program for Borrowers.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 27, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 27, 2014, at 10 a.m, in SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 27, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 27, 2014, at 10:30 a.m., to hold an African Affairs subcommittee hearing entitled, ''Powering Africa's Future: Examining the Power African Initiative.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT, FEDERAL RIGHTS, AND AGENCY ACTION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Oversight, Federal Rights, and Agency Action, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 27, 2014, at 3 p.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Access to Justice for Those Who Serve.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Kristopher Sharp, a fellow in Senator MURRAY's office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of today's session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. JOHANNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to Hope Jarkowski, a member of Senator CRAPO's staff.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION DISCHARGED

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session and the commerce committee be discharged from further consideration of PN1059; that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any related statements be printed in the Record; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

KATHRYN B. THOMSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMING TO UKRAINE AND NEIGHBORING REGIONS

Mr. KING. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2183, introduced earlier today.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2183) entitled ''United States International Programming to Ukraine and Neighboring Regions.''

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senate has been asked to take up and pass by unanimous consent House legislation on U.S. international programming to Ukraine and neighboring regions. This House bill directs the Broadcasting Board of Governors to increase programming in the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Ukrainian, Balkan, Russian, and Tatar language services, and authorizes up to an additional $10,000,000 in fiscal year 2014 for this purpose.

We all support Ukraine's democracy and territorial integrity, and want to provide credible news and information to people in Ukraine whose access to uncensored information has been blocked by the Russian Government. I intend to ensure that current programming for Ukraine, Russia, and neighboring regions is not reduced in fiscal year 2014. But I want to remind Senators, as well as Members of the House of Representatives, that the Congress already enacted the fiscal year 2014 funding level for U.S. international broadcasting to Ukraine and other regions of the world.

The House bill we are adopting today does not appropriate additional funds. Nor does it provide offsets for the cost of additional broadcasting to Ukraine, Russia or the other regions specified. As drafted it is an unfunded mandate, which as a practical matter has no effect unless we are to reduce broadcasting to other critical countries or regions, such as Burma and Tibet, which I doubt Senators of either party would support.

Consequently, this bill should be interpreted as authorizing funds to be appropriated for the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty to Ukraine and neighboring countries, consistent with the role of the House authorizing committee from which it originated. As Chairman of the Department of State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee that funds international broadcasting programs, I will work with the Broadcasting Board of Governors to ensure that additional funds are appropriated for these language services in fiscal year 2015 to enable them to sustain and strengthen critical broadcasts and programming to Ukraine, Russia, and neighboring regions.

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

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

The bill (S. 2183) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2183

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS.

(a) Congress finds and declares the following:

(1) The Russian Government has deliberately blocked the Ukrainian people's access to uncensored sources of information and has provided alternative news and information that is both inaccurate and inflammatory;

(2) United States international programming exists to advance the United States interests and values by presenting accurate and comprehensive news and information, which is the foundation for democratic governance;

(3) The opinions and views of the Ukrainian people, especially those people located in the eastern regions and Crimea, are not being accurately represented in Russian dominated mass media;

(4) Russian forces have seized more than five television stations in Crimea and taken over transmissions, switching to a 24/7 Russian propaganda format; this increase in programming augments the already robust pro-Russian programming to Ukraine;

(5) United States international programming has the potential to combat this anti-democratic propaganda.

(b) PROGRAMMING.—Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Incorporated, and the Voice of America service to Ukraine and neighboring regions shall—

(1) provide news and information that is accessible, credible, and accurate;

(2) emphasize investigative and analytical journalism to highlight inconsistencies and misinformation provided by Russian or pro-Russian media outlets;

(3) prioritize programming to areas where access to uncensored sources of information is limited or non-existent, especially populations serviced by Russian supported media outlets;

(4) increase the number of reporters and organizational presence in eastern Ukraine, especially in Crimea;

(5) promote democratic processes, respect for human rights, freedom of the press, and territorial sovereignty; and

(6) take necessary preparatory steps to continue and increase programming and content that promotes democracy and government transparency in Russia.

(c) PROGRAMMING SURGE.—RFE/RL, Incorporated, and Voice of America programming to Ukraine and neighboring regions shall—

(1) prioritize programming to eastern Ukraine, including Crimea, and Moldova, and to ethnic and linguistic Russian populations, as well as to Tatar minorities;

(2) prioritize news and information that directly contributes to the target audiences' understanding of political and economic developments in Ukraine and Moldova, including countering misinformation that may originate from other news outlets, especially Russian supported news outlets;

(3) provide programming content 24 hours a day, seven days a week to target populations, using all available and effective distribution outlets, including—

(A) at least 8 weekly hours of total original television and video content in Ukrainian, Russian, and Tatar languages, not inclusive of live video streaming coverage of breaking news, to be distributed on satellite, digital, and through regional television affiliates by the Voice of America; and

(B) at least 14 weekly hours the total audio content in Ukrainian, Russian, and Tatar languages to be distributed on satellite, digital, and through regional radio affiliates of RFE/RL, Incorporated;

(4) expand the use, audience, and audience engagement of mobile news and multimedia platforms by RFE/RL, Incorporated, and the Voice of America, including through Internet-based social networking platforms; and

(5) partner with private sector broadcasters and affiliates to seek and start coproduction for new, original content, when possible, to increase distribution.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2014, in addition to funds otherwise made available for such purposes, up to $10,000,000 to carry out programming in the Ukrainian, Balkan, Russian, and Tatar language services of RFE/RL, Incorporated, and the Voice of America, for the purpose of bolstering existing United States programming to the people of Ukraine and neighboring regions, and increasing programming capacity and jamming circumvention technology to overcome any disruptions to service.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Broadcasting Board of Governors shall submit to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Foreign Relations and Appropriations of the Senate a detailed report on plans to increase broadcasts pursuant to subsections (a) and (b).

MILITARY AND VETERANS CAREGIVER MONTH

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 395.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 395) designating the month of April 2014 as ''Military and Veterans Caregiver Month.''

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

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 395) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of Tuesday, March 25, 2014, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the Republican leader, pursuant to Public Law 105–292, as amended by Public Law 106–55, Public Law 107–228, and Public Law 112–75, appoints the following individuals to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: Mary Ann Glendon of Massachusetts, and M. Zuhdi Jasser of Arizona.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2014

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2 p.m., Monday, March 31, 2014; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4302 under the previous order; that at 5 p.m. the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the Owens nomination, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. KING. Mr. President, there will be at least two rollcall votes on Monday at 5:30 p.m.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KING. Mr. President, if there is no business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn following the remarks of the Senator from Alaska, Ms. MURKOWSKI.

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

The Senator from Alaska.

GRID SECURITY

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, first, I thank my friend from Maine and appreciate the conversations we have had in this past week. He has taken a journey to the north that most of us only dream about. He is engaged in issues I care deeply about as it relates to the Arctic. Although I know that was not the discussion my colleague was speaking to earlier, I just wanted to note while my friend from Maine was still on the floor that I look forward to working on these issues of great importance not only to my State but truly to our entire Nation and Arctic Nation.

I come to the floor this evening to speak very briefly about the physical security of our Nation's power grid, which is a very important subject. Recently, there were stories in the Wall Street Journal about an attack on the California Metcalf substation that happened last April and has drawn considerable attention. While those stories about that attack highlighted potential vulnerabilities, my principal focus will be to highlight not only the safeguards that are already in place to protect the Nation's bulk power system but also to announce a step that I believe is now necessary to prevent the undue release of sensitive nonpublic information.

First and foremost—and I think this is important for people to recognize—it is important to remember that during the Metcalf incident, the PG&E system did not lose power. In fact, it was an incident that many didn't know had taken place until months after because there was no loss of power. I think this fact emphasizes the grid's resiliency and the importance of building redundancy into the bulk power system.

As usual, the electric industry has learned from and responded to—appropriately responded—the California incident. At the end of last year the Departments of Energy and Homeland Security—along with the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, or NERC, along with the Federal Regulatory Commission, or FERC, and the FBI began a cross-country tour of 10 cities in order to brief utility operators and local law enforcement on the lessens that were learned from Metcalf. Government officials discussed mitigation strategies and meeting participants were able to develop some pretty important relationships between first responders and the industry.

In fact, as a result of the mandatory requirements of the 2005 Energy Policy Act, the electric industry has invested significant resources to address both physical and cyber security threats and vulnerabilities. Through partnerships with various Federal agencies, the industry is keenly focused on preparation, prevention, response, and recovery.

For example, NERC holds yearly security conferences and a grid exercise which tests and prepares industry on physical and cyber security events. Yet former FERC Chairman Jon Wellinghoff was quoted in the Wall Street Journal calling the Metcalf incident ''the most significant incident of domestic terrorism involving the grid that has ever occurred.''

In my view, comments such as these are certainly sensational. Depending on the factual context, they can actually be reckless.

Although the topic of physical security warrants discussion—absolutely warrants discussion and debate—we have to be prudent about information for the public sphere. Many government leaders are privy to confidential and sensitive information that if not treated carefully could provide a roadmap to terrorists or other bad actors about our vulnerabilities. At a minimum, government officials have a duty to safeguard sensitive information that they learn in their official capacity.

A story that appeared in the Wall Street Journal on March 13 was, I believe, shocking because it included sensitive information about the Nation's energy infrastructure that the newspaper said came from documents that were created at FERC. Although the Wall Street Journal did not name specific facilities at risk, it did detail the geographic regions and the number of facilities that if simultaneously disabled could cause serious harm. The March 13 article claimed the potential for a national blackout.

I want to commend FERC Chair Cheryl LaFleur for her statement regarding the publication of this information. I thank Commissioner Tony Clark as well for his statement about the matter.

I think it is fortunate our current FERC Commissioners are an independent lot. I understand that the Commission is looking into this matter, including the question of how sensitive internal FERC documents made their way into a very high-profile news article. I urge FERC to be very diligent in this matter and truly leave no stone unturned.

I have grave questions about the irresponsible release of nonpublic information that unduly pinpoints potential vulnerabilities of our Nation's grid. If this conduct is not already illegal, I have suggested it should be. The source of the leaked information appears to be someone with access to highly sensitive, narrowly distributed FERC documents. Releasing this sensitive information for publication has put the Nation potentially at greater risk and potentially endangered lives, including those of the many good people who are faithfully working every day to maintain and to protect the grid.

In order to learn what has happened and to determine how better to safeguard critical information as steps are being taken to make the grid less vulnerable, my colleague, the chairman of the energy committee, Senator LANDRIEU, and I have written to the inspector general of the Department of Energy whose oversight includes FERC.

It is our understanding that the IG has already begun an inquiry into this matter. We have asked him to conclude his inquiry as soon as possible. We have also asked for his immediate assurance that if the inquiry must ripen into an investigation, that he will—as we have every confidence he would—follow the information he learns wherever it leads.

We are eager to receive recommendations to improve the safeguard of keeping sensitive information from disclosure. We have also asked the IG to look into the obligations of current and former FERC Commissioners and employees with respect to nonpublic information. I would certainly hope the inspector general's inquiry leads to the identification of the person or persons who provided this sensitive, nonpublic information to the media, but even if it does not, even if we learn the leak of this information could have been accomplished without the violation of any disclosure restrictions, we will consider introducing legislation to make sure that in the future the disclosure of nonpublic information about our energy infrastructure that puts our Nation at risk is a violation of Federal law. We must remember that the possibility of a physical attack that disables key parts of the grid has always been a risk. Again, in this instance, though, with the Metcalf instance, our system worked and no power was lost. Therefore, I urge a measured approach when evaluating our next steps in response to Metcalf. Erecting barriers at every transmission substation and surveillance of every inch of transmission is not feasible. I am concerned these types of measures will potentially cost billions of dollars with little impact. There must also be a balance between the measures related to physical security and the costs that would likely be passed through to consumers.

On March 7, the FERC used the grid reliability framework that Congress established in the 2005 Energy Policy Act by directing NERC to establish standards addressing physical vulnerabilities to better protect our Nation's power grid. NERC has 90 days to develop its proposed standards through a collaborative process. The proposed standard will then be reviewed independently before it is submitted to the FERC.

Our Energy Policy Act standards are foundational. Constant information sharing between government and industry, coupled with alerts for rapid response, are also key tools for dealing with the changing state of security.

As policymakers we must include physical security as a key issue in our decisions. We must also take measured steps to protect the grid, but we shouldn't sensationalize the threat. I commend NERC and FERC for starting the standard-setting process, and I urge all of the participants to strike this balance between measures related to physical security and costs and benefits for electric customers and the broader public as a whole.

Again, I thank the chairman of the energy committee for her willingness to join me on this letter which again I feel is very important as we begin this review through the inspector general. I know the Presiding Officer, as a valued member of the energy committee, is very keenly aware of these issues when we talk about our grid reliability threats to not only the physical security of our infrastructure but most certainly the cyber security threats we face as well.

I appreciate the indulgence of the Chair this evening.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter I referenced in my remarks be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE, COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, March 27, 2014.

Hon. GREGORY FRIEDMAN,
Inspector General, Department of Energy, Washington, DC.

DEAR INSPECTOR GENERAL FREIDMAN: The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is responsible for oversight of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (the Commission, FERC) and has jurisdiction over the laws the Commission administers, including the Federal Power Act (FPA). In the Energy Policy Act of 2005, Congress amended the FPA, adding section 215, to establish the framework for ensuring that the nation's bulk power system (BPS or electric grid) is reliable.

Recent reports in The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) about grid security (see attached) were shocking in their detail and appear to have been based upon highly sensitive, narrowly distributed FERC documents that may have pinpointed vulnerabilities of the BPS. In the wrong hands, such documents potentially could provide a roadmap for those who would seek to harm the nation by intentionally causing one or more power blackouts.

We are writing to respectfully request that the Department of Energy Office of Inspector General (OIG) conduct a full and thorough inquiry regarding the apparent leak to the WSJ of sensitive information regarding physical threats to the electric grid. As part of this effort we ask not only that the OIG review the past, but also provide recommendations regarding how to avoid a repeat of this very unfortunate incident in the future.

We understand that your office has initiated a preliminary review of this matter on its own initiative and we commend you for doing so. We are also aware that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is conducting its own investigation. We commend the FERC for this action, as well. However, we note that it can be difficult for agencies to effectively investigate their own actions which is why we are making this request to the OIG.

The internal FERC documents regarding grid security that appear to have been disclosed to the WSJ, are sufficiently sensitive and potentially harmful to grid security that we believe it would not be prudent to highlight specifically the issues they raise at this time as part of this letter. For the same reason, many of the questions that we request that OIG answer also should not be made public. Consequently, we will provide to OIG on a non-public basis associated questions.

We do not know if the FERC documents that apparently form the basis of the news reports are credible, but in any case, disclosing and sensationalizing them, as it appears was the work of the person who gave them to the newspaper, is highly irresponsible or worse.

Even if your inquiry does not lead to the identification of the person who provided this sensitive non-public information to the media (and we hope it will), if you conclude that the unauthorized disclosure of this information could have been accomplished without the violation of any disclosure restrictions, legislation could well be necessary. In that event, we will consider introducing legislation to make sure that the unauthorized disclosure of non-public information about energy infrastructure that puts our nation at risk is a violation of federal law.

We ask you to conclude your inquiry as soon as possible. We have every confidence that you will follow the information you uncover wherever it leads. Nevertheless, we seek your immediate assurance that if the results of your initial inquiry indicate that applicable Federal law and regulations may have been violated by any current or former Federal employee or official that you would then initiate a formal investigation using all the powers of your office.

We are eager to receive recommendations concerning the preparation, handling and proper treatment of the sensitive information that forms the basis of the news reports and any related information. We also ask you to examine the legal or regulatory obligations of current and former FERC commissioners and employees with respect to nonpublic information, especially of the type covered by this letter and the associated non-public attachment.

Thank you for your consideration. We intend to be fully supportive of your inquiry.

Again, we look forward to having the benefit of your findings as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

MARY LANDRIEU,
Chairwoman.
LISA MURKOWSKI,
Ranking Member.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate now stands in adjournment until Monday, March 31, 2014, at 2 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:19 p.m., adjourned until Monday, March 31, 2014, at 2 p.m.

DISCHARGED NOMINATION

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation was discharged from further consideration of the following nomination by unanimous consent and the nomination was confirmed:

KATHRYN B. THOMSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 27, 2014:

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MATTHEW H. TUELLER, OF UTAH, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

KATHRYN B. THOMSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

EXXONMOBIL RECEIVES 2014 W.O. LAWTON BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 31, the National Association of Workforce Boards will present its 2014 W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award to ExxonMobil for its important contributions to our community. The W.O. Lawton Business Leadership Award aims to honor and recognize businesses that make valuable investments in a community to help meet its needs through workforce training, educational programs, and funding for similar services. ExxonMobil has long demonstrated its commitment to the greater Houston community but its particular work with the ''Community College Petrochemical Initiative'' deserves special recognition.

ExxonMobil is currently investing billions in capital investment to expand its petrochemical operations in the Houston area, including a new corporate 285-acre campus. This expansion will soon be home to 10,000 jobs. However, with the thousands of baby boomers within the petrochemical industry who are retiring, ExxonMobil recognized the need to proactively train and hire more skilled workers. Working with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and the Texas Workforce Commission, ExxonMobil partnered with nine Houston-area community colleges to create a training and education initiative that will train and recruit new workers for high-paying jobs, helping to replace the continually increasing number of retirees from the industry. To do so, ExxonMobil committed $500,000 to fund its Community College Petrochemical Initiative. In partnership with Lee College in Baytown, Texas, ExxonMobil leveraged equipment and provided volunteers to help the community college upgrade its labs with industry standard equipment. The company also served as a ''gold sponsor'' for the college's EnergyVenture Program, a 36-hour program or ''camp'' that teaches middle and high school students about careers within the energy industry. The company also provided paid internships to Lee College students. The results have been remarkable: 100 percent of the interns whom completed the program were hired by ExxonMobil.

Of course, in Texas we know that ExxonMobil's commitment to its community expands beyond this initiative. Last year, ExxonMobil also participated in a number of other community collaborations, including Partners in Education, a program that funds and provides volunteers to serve as tutors and mentors for students on STEM-related assignments; Introduce a Girl to Engineering, a program that provides 180 middle school girls with hands-on activities to learn and get excited about careers in the STEM fields; Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID), a program that has helped more than 400 students achieve their dream of attending college by improving their academic and organizational skills; Science Day, a program that has taught over 350 eighth grade students about the many daily uses for chemical reactions; Volunteer Involvement Program (VIP), a program that has donated $580,000 to schools or nonprofits where ExxonMobil employees volunteer; Student Essay Contest, a contest sponsored by ExxonMobil for high school students to write about energy awareness; and paying for internships for students at Lee College, Texas A&M University and The University of Texas.

In addition, ExxonMobil's management and employees participate and provide leadership to local community economic and workforce development entities, serving on the boards for economic development associations, chambers and workforce committees. They also work closely with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's career offices to help recruit and hire new employees.

These accomplishments are impressive in and of themselves, but they are only indicative of the long-lasting impact that this company's community collaborations will have down the road. ExxonMobil is setting the standard in how employers today can make meaningful investments to help prepare tomorrow's workers and to benefit local communities. And that's just the way it is.

HONORING MS. ROSA MARÍA PAYÁ ACEVEDO

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History Month, I rise today to honor Rosa María Payá Acevedo, an outstanding individual who has been a strong advocate for a democratic Cuba and an inspiration to women around the world.

Ms. Payá Acevedo was born on January 10, 1989 in Havana, Cuba. She graduated with a degree in physics and is an active member of El Cerro en La Habana, a Catholic parish where she participated in youth groups and parish activities in her childhood. Her parents, Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas and Ofelia Acevedo Maura, were the leaders of the Christian Liberation Movement, and she soon became very involved in the organization herself.

Ms. Payá Acevedo collaborated with Harold Cepero Escalante to coordinate the younger members of the Christian Liberation Movement and eventually published ''Somos Liberación,'' a newsletter the group still continues to write. Unfortunately, her life took a tragic turn in July of 2012 when her father and Mr. Cepero Escalante were both killed in a car crash under suspicious cirumcstances. There is significant evidence, including statements from Angel Carromero, the Spanish politician who was driving the car, that the Castro regime is responsible for the deaths of Mr. Payá and Mr. Cepero Escalante.

After her eloquent speech before the U.N. in February 2013 about the need for a formal investigation of the accident, she returned to Cuba and began receiving death threats. This has forced her to live in exile in the United States, where her relentless journey to achieve justice for the death of her father and Mr. Cepero Escalante continues. Her courageous and determined spirit is truly inspiring.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Ms. Rosa María Payá Acevedo for her continued fight for democracy and truth against the murderous Castro regime, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, Women's History Month is a time for all Americans to pay tribute to the generations of women who have made our world a better place in which to live. Today, it is my great honor to recognize Kalamazoo, Michigan's Lucinda Hinsdale Stone for her efforts to advance education reform and women's rights.

Lucinda was born 200 years ago this year, at a time in our history when women did not share the same rights as men.

Upon moving to Michigan in 1843 with her husband, Dr. James Stone, Lucinda became the first principal of the Ladies Department at the Kalamazoo Branch of the University of Michigan, which would soon become Kalamazoo College. Together, Lucinda and James Stone helped shape the school's direction, in part by introducing coeducation and promoting abolitionism and women's rights.

Lucinda flourished in her role and assisted in the education of a variety of professions and skills for women who came through her school. When Lucinda was ultimately forced to resign her office because of her advocacy for women's rights, she devoted her life to women's education and founded the Women's Club Movement in Michigan. As our country faced a turning tide of abolition and women's suffrage, Lucinda took it upon herself to educate and lecture from in her own home and doubled her efforts to give women everywhere a better chance.

Lucinda quickly became one of the foremost individuals in the state promoting women's rights and soon her tireless battle to bring higher education to women spread her reputation from coast to coast. Susan B. Anthony would share the works of Lucinda Hinsdale Stone and affectionately gave her the title, the ''Mother of Women's Clubs in Michigan.''

In the more than 50 years that she served as a leader in Michigan, Lucinda watched her groups expand as the rest of the country

caught on to the women's rights movement. Twenty years before areas in the Northeast formed associations for women, Lucinda was leading the Kalamazoo Ladies' Library Association as a model for the rest of the nation. That Association and its present members like Betty Lee Ongley—the first female mayor of neighboring Portage, Michigan—have continued to play a major role in keeping Lucinda's legacy alive today.

Lucinda would go on to work in social reform movements and women's organizations throughout the state and became a pillar for American women to turn to for strength and guidance. Her life's work was recognized in 1890, when the University of Michigan bestowed upon Lucinda their first honorary doctorate to a woman.

She lived to watch her very own pupil, Madelon Stockwell, become the first woman to be granted admission to the University of Michigan, and watched as Kalamazoo College granted its first academic degree to a female student. The legacy of her work for women and education remains evident today.

Throughout her extraordinary life, Lucinda became friends with other suffragist and abolitionist leaders including Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone, Antoinette Brown Blackwell, and the Grimké sisters. She was also a lifelong friend and admirer of Helen and Frederick Douglass, and even played host to Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Lucinda Hinsdale Stone represents the strength that we all hope to have in the face of oppression and inequality. Her lasting impacts have motivated women for generations and her name lives on in Michigan lore as one of the finest Americans to stand up for what they believe in.

CELEBRATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF HOMELESS SOLUTIONS, INC.

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Homeless Solutions, Inc., located in Morristown, Morris County, New Jersey, as it celebrates its 30th Anniversary.

Homeless Solutions, Inc. is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is "to offer shelter, services, and supportive housing to homeless and low-income people." They help those in need to rebuild their lives and become independent.

Homeless Solutions, Inc. began as an emergency men's shelter in Morristown, through the help of local clergy and business people. Originally known as the Morris Shelter, the organization housed ten men in facilities at the First Presbyterian Church of Morristown. Today, Homeless Solutions, Inc. provides 85 emergency shelter beds for men, women, families, and the homeless that are mentally ill. Since its inception 30 years, Homeless Solutions, Inc. has not only increased the amount of beds offered, but has also created many support programs and services, established the Housing Development division, and opened the Furnishing Solutions store.

The Housing Development division was established in 2004 to provide permanent supportive housing. Housing Development works with various municipalities to create attractive and cost effective housing. Due to its nonprofit status, the organization is able to reduce building and project costs through grants, donations, and government project subsidies. The staff within the Housing Development division is selected based on their extensive knowledge and experience. Two of the most important qualities of the staff are their knowledge of green building and neighborhood context.

Homeless Solutions, Inc. opened Furnishing Solutions in 2012. Furnishing Solutions is a resale furniture and design store located in Morris Plains. People donate items they no longer need, and those items will either go towards shelter services, or can be purchased at reduced prices. Since the opening of the store, there have been over 100 volunteers who have helped to sell more than 10,000 items.

Homeless Solutions, Inc. has grown significantly since its start 30 years ago. With the mission to provide shelter and housing to those in need, the organization has helped thousands through the good work of its volunteers and supporters. As Homeless Solutions, Inc. continuous to grow and help the community, it looks forward to the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating Homeless Solutions, Inc. as it celebrates its 30th Anniversary.

IN HONOR OF MR. JOHN DI STASIO'S RETIREMENT

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer a tribute to Mr. John Di Stasio. On April 11, 2014, Mr. Di Stasio will retire from a long and distinguished career with the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, where he has served for 32 years, the last six as General Manager and Chief Executive Officer. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this individual who has contributed so much to the Sacramento community.

SMUD—which is the nation's sixth-largest public electric utility, providing affordable and reliable power to 610,000 customers in my district and California's capital region—has been a leader in the public power community and in energy efficiency and clean resource development nationwide.

Mr. Di Stasio's commitment to the Sacramento community and to the environment, coupled with his business sense, people skills, and personal integrity, have added to SMUD's remarkable reputation during a transformative time in the energy industry. Hundreds of thousands of Californians' lives have greatly benefited from his leadership and vision.

Under Mr. Di Stasio's leadership, SMUD has consistently earned the top customer satisfaction scores of any California utility, and is regularly ranked among the top three utilities in the nation, in terms of residential and business customer satisfaction. Mr. Di Stasio also recently received Electric Power & Light magazine's CEO of the Year honors for large utilities.

Mr. Di Stasio, a native Californian, played a key role as SMUD became the first large utility in the state to have 20 percent of its power come from renewable resources such as wind, solar and biogas. And it is on track to increase its renewable portfolio to 33 percent by 2020, making it one of the greenest utilities in the country.

In 2009, SMUD received a smart grid infrastructure grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, the largest amount awarded to any public utility in the nation. SMUD used the smart grid grant money to augment its $308 million SmartSacramento initiative that included a ground-breaking time-of-use pricing pilot program, and construction of a state-of-the-art control room in SMUD's new East Campus—Operations Center. The East Campus—Operations Center received LEED Platinum status from the U.S. Green Building Council.

In addition to his service in Sacramento, Mr. Di Stasio is active in national and international energy issues, serving as a delegate with the United States Energy Association, where he assisted in electrification operations in Bangladesh, Brazil, Botswana, India and Jordan. Mr. Di Stasio has also helped effectively communicate and advance important legislative policy issues by providing expert testimony to Congress in 2009 on protecting the electric grid from cyber attacks, as well as advocating on behalf of consumer-owned utilities on Capitol Hill and at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

My personal and professional respect and admiration for Mr. Di Stasio runs deep, and as his friend, colleague and a fellow Sacramento citizen, I wish him happiness and good health.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking and recognizing John for his many years of service.

THE PASSING OF MRS. MARIELLA UKINA AMA HOLMAN

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a wonderful and beautiful spirit; Mrs. Mariella Ukina Ama Holman was a friend, mother, wife, teacher, activist, and trailblazer.

A woman of the world, Mariella Ukina Ama was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 4, 1922 to Kiushu Amakaya and Ada Adams. Her father, an immigrant from Japan, changed his name to Frank Ama and worked as a cook and caterer, and her mother was a laundress. Mariella and her brothers—Charles, Lloyd, and Bobby—were expected to meet their parents' high standards and were determined to overcome all odds.

As a child of the Great Depression, she worked hard, stood strong, and held her head high as one of the few children of color at the historic Philadelphia High School for Girls. Mariella continued her education in Atlanta, where she graduated from Atlanta University Laboratory High School. She completed her formal education at the renowned Spelman College, where she truly found her voice. At Spelman, Mariella bloomed into a woman of culture and class—studying and excelling in French and the humanities—gradually becoming more socially and politically conscious and active.

While working at Hampton Institute, now Hampton University, she met her husband-to-be, M. Carl Holman. In 1945, Mariella and Carl married and returned to Atlanta to begin a family; they were proud to raise their children—Kerry, Karen, and Kent—in the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. Her husband, a professor at Clark College in Atlanta, helped co-found the Atlanta Committee for Cooperative Action (ACCA) and became the editor-in-chief of The Atlanta Inquirer, which developed into a leading, weekly journal and voice for equality and justice in our nation. In the 1960s when Carl joined the staff of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, the family moved to Washington, D.C., where he eventually served as the president of the National Urban Coalition.

Throughout their marriage, Mrs. Holman was the backbone of their beautiful family and home, while maintaining her own career as a skilled educator and an activist in her own right. She taught French at Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta, and continued to teach in Washington, D.C. at Hart Junior High School until her retirement in the 1980s. In her classroom, she opened the minds of countless young people to a global language and community beyond the United States; she brought Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean to their front door through her creative and passionate instruction.

For years, Mrs. Holman also provided wise counsel to the architects—the movers-and-shakers—of the Civil Rights Movement. She opened her home to organizers for strategy meetings, and her hospitality, cooking, and warmth fed stomachs and reignited spirits. When her beloved husband passed away in 1988, Mariella continued to be the grounding, central force of her family, friends, and community for 26 years. Last week, on March 17, 2014, Mrs. Mariella Holman passed away surrounded by loving family and friends. Although I know that she lived a long and full life, I was still heartbroken to hear the news.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to her children—Kwasi (Kerry) G. Holman, Kinshasha (Karen) Holman Conwill, and Kwame (Kent) Holman; grandchildren—Monifa, Kevin, Donovan, and Camille; seven great-grandchildren; great-greatgrandchild; brother, Lloyd, and his wife, Muriel, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and countless loving family members and friends. They were guided and grounded by this beautiful and strong matriarch, and today each and every one of them is in my thoughts and prayers.

Mella—as she was called by all who knew and loved her—will be truly missed. She touched so many with her warmth, her spirit, her cooking, and her timeless class, and I am proud to have known and loved this great and wonderful lady.

HONORING MS. YRIS TAMARA PEREZ AGUILERA

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History month I rise today to honor Yris Tamara Perez Aguilera, an outstanding individual and someone who has been an inspiration to the Cuban community.

Ms. Aguilera was born in Cuba, and joined the Pedro Luis Boitel National Civic Resistance Movement in 1999. This organization was formed by families of Cuban political prisoners to fight for their freedom. Ms. Aguilera's brother, Mario Perez Aguilera, was a political prisoner at that moment.

In 2009, Ms. Aguilera helped found the Rosa Parks Feminine Civic Rights Movement, and is currently the leader of the group. This movement carries out weekly public demonstrations in different provinces of Cuba to pray for the martyrs of the Cuban dictatorship. The movement also performs humanitarian campaigns to help homeless women and children. Through Ms. Aguilera's endless efforts, tenacity, and spirit the movement is able to find these homeless people food and shelter, despite resistance from Cuban authorities.

During the public demonstrations of the group, Ms. Aguilera and other members of the Rosa Parks Movement have been brutally beaten and have suffered from arbitrary detentions and even death threats by the Castro regime. Ms. Aguilera herself has been threatened with sexual assault in Santa Clara by State Security agents. Ms. Aguilera has participated in conferences and meetings around the world in order to denounce human rights abuses on the island, and continues to work tirelessly for the freedom of its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Ms. Yris Tamara Perez Aguilera for her continued efforts against the regime in Cuba, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NANCY ROBBINSON

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Nancy Robbinson. A native of Orlando, Mrs. Robbinson has served on the Orange County School Board representing District 6 since 2008. As a School Board Member, she serves on the Communications and Legislative Committees. She also represents the Central Florida School Boards Coalition on the Congress of Regional Leaders through myregion.org. Mrs. Robbinson became a Florida School Board Association (FSBA) Certified Board Member in June 2010, and serves on the FSBA Board of Directors and Legislative Committee.

Mrs. Robbinson grew up in the district she represents and attended Orange County Public Schools. She graduated from Auburn University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Relations/Speech Communications. She is also a member of the. inaugural class of the Orlando Business Force's Central Florida Political Leadership Institute.

Passionate about serving her community, Mrs. Robbinson is on the Board of Directors for the Urban Think! Foundation, which supports literacy programs for inner-city Orlando students. She has also served on the Destiny Foundation's Greater Orlando Food Outreach Advisory Board, the Mayor's Education Action Council, Orange County Public School Foundation's ''Count Me In'' Steering Committee, and the Edgewater High School Task Force for Renovation. Mrs. Robbinson has been involved in the schools that her children have attended for the past 19 years as both a PTA officer and mentor.

Mrs. Robbinson's family lives in the College Park area of Orlando. She and her husband, Bill, have three children, one who recently graduated from the University of Georgia, one who attends Auburn University, and an Edgewater High School student.

I am happy to honor Nancy Robbinson, during Women's History Month, for her contributions to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF KATHLEEN ''KAT'' BUTLER GORDON

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Kathleen ''Kat'' Gordon. Mrs. Gordon is a former South Carolina and Orange County, Florida educator. She was elected to the Orange County School Board in November 2000 and became School Board Vice Chair in 2013.

Mrs. Gordon has been a resident of Orange County since 1968. She was a librarian and counselor in Orange County for 25 years. She has also taught as an adjunct professor at the University of Central Florida (UCF) and at Valencia College. In addition to her career in education, Mrs. Gordon worked full-time in the business world for six years as a licensed mortgage broker, life insurance agent, and a registered securities representative.

In 2005, she earned Board Member Certification from the Florida School Boards Association (FSBA) and also served on FSBA's Board of Directors. Mrs. Gordon is a former Board Member of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) Black Caucus and is the former Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

Mrs. Gordon has been honored by numerous organizations. In 2006, she received the Junior Achievement's Educator of the Year Award. In addition, she received the Humanitarian Award at the 2006 Annual Scholarships and Volunteers Awards Dinner sponsored by Orange County Mayor Richard T. Crotty and the Board of County Commissioners.

In 2007, Mrs. Gordon was named Teacher of the Year for the New Beginnings Education Center in Osceola County. She also received the Distinguished Dove Award for being selected Osceola County's Vocational Teacher of the Year, the Denn John MS Minority Educator of the Year award, and Osceola County's Ida S. Baker Minority Educator of the Year award. In October 2007, the College of Education at UCF named Mrs. Gordon as one of its ''Alumni of the Decades'' as part of its 40th anniversary celebration.

In 2008, Mrs. Gordon received an award from the Osceola Classroom Teachers Association for her dedication and service to cultural diversity within Osceola District Schools.

Mrs. Gordon has served on the Governor of Florida State Dropout Task Force. In 2009, President Obama appointed her to be a member of the Selective Service System Local Board in the state of Florida serving Region II. Also in 2009, Mrs. Gordon received the General Daniel ''Chappie'' James, Jr. Four Star Major Award for community service.

In addition, Mrs. Gordon has been awarded by her church, Saint Mark A.M.E., and by the

Carter Tabernacle CME Church for her civic and social involvement.

Mrs. Gordon received her bachelor's degree in library science from South Carolina State University, and her master's degree in guidance and counseling and certification in administration and supervision from UCF. Mrs. Gordon is currently pursuing her Doctor of Philosophy in Education with a Specialization in Organizational Leadership.

Mrs. Gordon is the widow of the late Reverend James D. Gordon, Jr., and the mother of three Jones High School graduates.

I am happy to honor Kat Gordon, during Women's History Month, for her contributions to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TIFFANY MOORE RUSSELL

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Commissioner Tiffany Moore Russell. A native of Orlando, Florida and a product of Orange County's public school system, Commissioner Moore Russell is an alumna of Dr. Phillips High School. She received her B.A. in Political Science from the University of South Florida and a J.D. from Florida State University College of Law.

In November of 2006, she made history by becoming the youngest County Commissioner ever elected to serve on the Orange County Commission. In her role as the Commissioner for District 6, she oversees a budget of over $5 billion and more than 8000 employees. Commissioner Moore Russell is committed to remaining accountable and accessible to each and every constituent, increasing recreational and career opportunities for youth, creating stable and viable neighborhoods, and strengthening Orange County's economy by increasing the availability of jobs and minority business opportunities.

Commissioner Moore Russell has been a community advocate for many years, both as an elected official and a private citizen. Prior to her role as Commissioner, she served on the Orange County Community Action Board, where she was elected Chairman and Vice Chairman. She also accepted volunteer appointments to both the Orange County Board of Zoning and Adjustments and the Orange County Citizens Review Board. She has also served on numerous boards including Orange County's Commission on Aging, Value and Adjustment Board, Youth and Family Services Board, the Downtown Orlando CRA/DDB Board, African American Chamber of Commerce, 2008 Electoral Canvassing Board, International Drive Master Transit and Improvement District, METROPLAN, and the Florida Association of Counties.

Her love for the Central Florida community is evident through her desire to initiate local community programs. Family Hope Day is a program designed to promote community partnerships, neighborhood unity, and a safer, more caring community for the residents of the Washington Park neighborhood. The Annual Summer Safety Event was established to prepare students for a safe, positive, and productive summer vacation. The Pine Hills Clean Sweep is organized to remove debris and trash from the streets in an effort to make the Pine Hills neighborhood a better place to live. The Commissioner's W/MBE Townhall Meetings are citizen driven forums that allow local business owners to discuss topics related to doing business in Orange County. In addition, Commissioner Moore Russell initiated the E-Zone Workshop, ''School Days Are Here Again'' Back to School Rally, ''Holiday Senior Brunch,'' and ''Holiday Extravaganza'' programs.

Commissioner Moore Russell is a member of the local chapter of the NAACP, the Florida Bar, the Orange County Bar Association, the Virgil Hawkins Chapter of the National Bar Association, the Paul C. Perkins Bar Association, the Central Florida Women's Lawyer Association, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the Life Center Church of Eatonville, Florida. In addition to serving on the commission she is an Associate Counsel with the Law Offices of John DiMasi. Commissioner Russell is married to Anthony K. Russell, Jr. and they are the proud parents of Anthony K. Russell, III.

I am happy to honor Commissioner Tiffany Moore Russell, during Women's History Month, for her contributions to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NANCY CAROLA PLATTE JACOBSON

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Nancy Carola Platte Jacobson. Nancy was born at the end of World War II. Her father, William Neal Platte, a metallurgical research engineer, worked in the aircraft industry. She is a first-generation German-American, as her mother, Ursula Carola Brunhilt Bruck, was born in Germany. Her German grandparents were present in her life for many years. From them, Nancy acquired a deep appreciation for our democracy and America's place in history.

Growing up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Nancy received an excellent public education. She remains grateful to mentors like her world history teacher, Ronald Hoover, who recognized her capabilities and pushed her to achieve, and Frau Martha Rose, who taught Nancy her mother tongue, German, in high school.

Nancy went on to major in German, with minors in French and English, at the University of Pittsburgh, finishing Magna Cum Laude in 1966. It was her great good fortune and honor to be awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Germany for the year following her graduation. World War II had ended barely 20 years earlier, and the Berlin Wall had been up for only a few years. During her time in Germany, Nancy spent a life-changing week in East Berlin.

Nancy lived and worked in the Washington, D.C. area in 1968, a tumultuous time in American history. After moving to Florida in 1969, she became a certified paralegal and managed a law office. In mid-life, Nancy returned to school and obtained her law degree from the University of Florida in 1984.

Although Nancy acknowledges the fortunate circumstances of her birth, she has often said she was less fortunate to be born female at a time when women's choices were restricted by law and social convention. Nancy believes that we as a country lose when society stereotypes and restricts any segment of our population based on race, gender, ethnicity, orientation, or other labels.

Now retired, Nancy has devoted the past decade of her life to civic activism and citizen lobbying to achieve social and economic justice for all and to restore and strengthen our democracy. Galvanized by the contentious election of 2000, Nancy worked with many others on election integrity and protection issues in Florida. She later worked to pass the ''Fair Districts'' amendment to Florida's state constitution in order to reduce the disenfranchisement of Florida's citizens through gerrymandering.

Nancy is also an elected member of the Democratic National Committee, representing Florida since 2008. Nancy has always been grateful to her husband, James R. Lussier, for his support of her civic and political activism. Without his support, Nancy would not have been able to accomplish a fraction of what she has achieved and what she hopes to achieve going forward.

I am happy to honor Nancy Carola Platte Jacobson, during Women's History Month, for her civic activism and efforts toward social and economic justice.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $17,555,984,029,917.02. We've added $6,929,106,981,003.94 to our debt in 5 years. This is over $6.9 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

THE INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO DIRECT THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE LIBRARY TO ACCEPT A STATUE DEPICTING PIERRE L'ENFANT FROM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE PERMANENT DISPLAY OF THE STATUE IN THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, in this month in which Pierre L'Enfant was hired to design the plan for the District for Columbia in 1791, I introduce a bill to direct the Joint Committee on the Library to accept a statue depicting Pierre L'Enfant from the District of Columbia and to provide for the permanent display of the statue in the United States Capitol.

Pierre L'Enfant was born in France in 1754. He was an engineer and an architect, and he traveled to the United States to serve with the United States in the Revolutionary War. In March 1791, L'Enfant was hired to develop the design for the District of Columbia. L'Enfant's design for the city was so remarkable that it remains and is cherished today in the nation's capital and throughout this country. L'Enfant's design envisioned a federal and residential city with diagonal streets propelling from Congress and the President's home, beautiful boulevards on local streets and neighborhoods, and open spaces for monuments, memorials and historical structures, all of which largely

remain intact, protected as a historical treasure.

In 2006, the residents of the District of Columbia chose L'Enfant as one of the top ten people that have given distinguishable service to the District of Columbia and the selection committee created by the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities chose L'Enfant as the second statute from D.C. to be placed in the United States Capitol. The District's first choice for a statute was Frederick Douglass, and I am pleased that the Douglass statue now sits in Emancipation Hall. Because the United States Capitol does not currently appropriately recognize the contributions of Pierre L'Enfant and because D.C. residents and stakeholders chose L'Enfant as a distinguishable Washingtonian, this bill would require the Joint Committee on the Library to place the Pierre L'Enfant statute in the United States Capitol.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING MS. NORMA WRIGHT

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues Congresswoman ZOE LOFGREN and Congressman SAM FARR to honor the life and contributions of our dear friend, Ms. Norma Wright, who recently passed away after a lifetime of serving her community.

Norma Wright dedicated her life to improving education and was respected by all who knew her. She initially became involved in the education system while raising her three children: Bill, Beth, and Nancy. Her passion for educating the children in her life inspired her to return to college to gain a teaching credential. Upon earning her credential, she served as a special education teacher in Gilroy, CA, and then became a Social Studies teacher. Not long after, her innovative and effective teaching style made her the Community Schools Director for the district.

After she married Mr. Kenneth D. Wright, she became more active in local politics and educational policy. For many years, both Norma and Kenneth were deeply involved in both the California Teachers Association and the National Education Association.

Eventually, Ms. Wright returned to school to obtain her Master's Degree in Public Education. With her degree, she became the Social Studies Coordinator at the Santa Clara County Office of Education. During her tenure, she established the Youth at Risk Program, a program that was recognized and replicated statewide. Soon after, she was asked to become the Assistant Director of the Community Juvenile Justice Program.

A few years later, Ms. Wright met two individuals who shaped the future of her career in education and politics. With Mr. Roy Erickson, she helped establish the Constitutional Rights Foundation's training programs. And with Mr. Chuck Quigley, she launched her career-long work with the Constitutional Rights Foundation, the Center for Civic Justice Education, and the Youth for Justice Network.

In 1990, Ms. Wright left her position as the Social Studies Coordinator at the Santa Clara County Office of Education and became the Director of Justice Programs at the Center for Civic Education. In this capacity, Norma worked to influence education programs across the country to include civic education and high quality social studies programs. She also traveled internationally to share her ideas about democracy, justice, fairness, and equality. The California Council for the Social Studies honored her with the Roy Erickson Award for her work.

Through her law-related education programs and work with the Constitutional Rights Foundation, Norma helped establish the Youth for Justice Network, a coordinated law-related education program that helped promote professional development through a consortium of the Constitutional Rights Foundation, the Public Education Division of the American Bar Association, Street Law, the Center for Civic Education, and the Constitutional Rights Foundation-Chicago.

Her political activism and work to improve social studies programs in the Bay Area made her an asset to many of California's elected officials, including ourselves, Representatives Don Edwards and Lynn Woolsey, U.S. Senators DIANNE FEINSTEIN and BARBARA BOXER, and former U.S Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta. Through her dedication to the promotion of civic education, she also forged relationships with several federal judges and state legislators.

It is in thanks for, and in admiration of, Ms. Norma Wright's commitment to civic education that we offer these words today. We hope her commitment of public service continues to be an inspiration to the young people of generations to come. Thank you Norma, we will miss you.

HONORING REPRESENTATIVE KATHLEEN C. PASSIDOMO

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History month I rise today to honor Representative Kathleen Passidomo, an outstanding individual and someone who has been an inspiration in the South Florida community, specifically in Naples.

Representative Passidomo grew up in New Jersey and received her law degree from Stetson University College of Law in 1978. She has been a member of the Florida Bar since 1979, and is a Florida Bar Board Certified Real Estate Lawyer. Rep. Passidomo has had a distinguished career in law, receiving multiple Attorney of the Year Awards and the 2010 Florida Bar President's Pro Bono Service Award for providing free legal services to the disadvantaged. She is also a past President of the Board of Directors of the Collier County Bar Association and of the Collier County Women's Bar Association.

Rep. Passidomo has served in the Florida House of Representatives since November 2010, representing District 106. She is currently the Chairman of the Ethics and Elections Subcommittee of the State Affairs Committee, and also serves on the Judiciary Committee as well as the Select Committee on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. She is also a partner in the firm of Kelly, Passidomo & Alba LLP, and serves as the Vice-Chairman of the Collier County Foreclosure Task Force.

Rep. Passidomo has served in more than 60 leadership and membership roles in professional and community organizations and has been recognized with countless awards for her service within Collier County. She is a member of the Board of Trustees of Hodges University, and is a founding director of the Collier County Senior Resource Center, Inc. Rep. Passidomo has lived in Naples with her family for 34 years and in 2000 she, along with her husband were co-recipients of the Naples Daily News Collier County Citizen of the Year award.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Representative Kathleen Passidomo for her continued service to the Naples community and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

CELEBRATING 140TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREATER MORRISTOWN YMCA

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor The Greater Morristown YMCA, located in Hanover Township, Morris County, New Jersey, as it celebrates its 140th Anniversary.

The Greater Morristown YMCA was founded by Dr. Frederick Owen and Reverend Thomas Souper on Friday, January 2, 1874. The two founding fathers held their first meeting in the Baptist Church located on The Green of Morristown, lasting until midnight and resulting in the Morristown YMCA.

The original location for the YMCA was a rented second floor walkup. The organization moved in 1881 to provide better facilities. After the purchase of their new building, a night school was created for boys and men. The purpose of this school was to teach reading, spelling, and arithmetic. During this time, the YMCA was only open to males.

In 1883, Mrs. Jacob Sutplen began the Ladies Auxiliary to help raise funds for the facility. The group became an instrumental branch of the organization, both administrative and social, yet women were still not allowed membership. However, this changed around the time of World War I, when the organization decided to open its doors to women part time, offering classes and exclusive time in the gymnasium.

During this period, the gymnasium was described as one of the most complete gymnasiums in the country. Not only was the gym well ventilated and electrically illuminated, but it also offered adjoining bathrooms with hot and cold water for showers. At this time, the building also included classrooms, game rooms, and a bowling alley.

By 1888, the Board of Directors purchased a new lot and building due to the demands of growth. In 1909, the YMCA moved to its third home. Its fourth and current location opened in 1981, located in Cedar Knolls. This facility offers four locker rooms, four racquetball courts, a full gymnasium, an indoor track, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, and much

more. In 2001, with the help of donations, the Morristown YMCA was able to increase the functional space from 37,000 square feet to 48,000 square feet. In 2002, YMCA purchased the property next door, increasing its size to 13 acres.

The Greater Morristown YMCA currently offers more than ninety free fitness classes, child care, an up-to-date fitness center, conference center and library, and much more. The employees and volunteers at The Greater Morristown YMCA continue to focus on growing and improving the Foundation to meet the needs of the community, today, and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating The Greater Morristown YMCA as it celebrates its 140th Anniversary.

WELCOMING JAMES W. WARHOLA

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Dr. James Warhola to the Capitol. Dr. Warhola is the Chair of the Political Science Department at the University of Maine, where he has taught for more than three decades.

Dr. Warhola is an accomplished scholar who has written extensively on the relationship between the United States and Russia. Today, Dr. Warhola will share his perspective on our nation's still-evolving relationship with Russia at a briefing hosted by the U.S. Commission on Security & Cooperation in Europe.

As Congress continues to weigh the implications of the unfolding situation in Crimea, Dr. Warhola's lecture will provide critical insight to Members of Congress and their staffs who are monitoring this situation.

As the Ranking Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Warhola for his service in the United States Air Force and the Ohio Air National Guard.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming James W. Warhola to Washington.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE BATTLE OF HORSESHOE BEND

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention today to recognize Horseshoe Bend National Military Park on the bicentennial of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend.

The Battle of Horseshoe Bend took place during the War of 1812 in what is now known as Daviston, Alabama. On March 27, 1814, General Andrew Jackson led American troops into a day-long battle against a faction of the Creek Indians. Although the battle was trying, General Jackson and his troops defeated the Red Sticks.

March 27, 2014, will mark the bicentennial of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. The area where the battle took place is now known as Horseshoe Bend National Military Park. From March 27th–29th, a celebration of the bicentennial of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend will be held. This event aims to recreate frontier life in the year 1814 and seeks to emphasize the importance of the battle in United States history. The Alabama Tourism Department named the event one of its Top Ten Events for 2014.

Mr. Speaker, please join me and the community of Daviston, Alabama, in celebrating the bicentennial of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH RATE

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, Medicare is the federal health insurance program for people who are 65 or older, certain younger people with disabilities, and people with End-Stage Renal Disease (permanent kidney failure requiring dialysis or a transplant).

For the past 11 years, the Medicare sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula has impeded stability in the Medicare program for providers and beneficiaries. Congress has to fix the SGR and not continue to do short term fixes every 3 or 6 or 12 months. Physicians should and deserve equitable reimbursement and not a lower reimbursement rate for the services they provide to our seniors. This is one of the leading reasons why physicians are leaving their practice. We should repeal SGR and establish a legislative fix with a minimum five-year period of payment stability for our doctors. This period will allow doctors to develop long-term strategic planning for their practice and time to invest in electronic health information technology and other medical systems to improve access and quality care for their patients.

Now is the time to capitalize on the lower offset now projected for the permanent repeal of the SGR formula otherwise failure to do so may cause problems for many providers to see Medicare patients. Ten thousand new enrollees enter Medicare each day. Access to physicians will suffer for the Medicare population as the gap between payments and practice costs continue to grow.

We needed to pass H.R. 4015 without any poison pill provisions that will attempt to take pot shots to diminish the efficacy of the Affordable Care Act.

HONORING MS. KAMELA PATTON

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History month I rise today to honor Dr. Kamela Patton, an outstanding individual and someone who has been an inspiration to the South Florida community.

Dr. Patton received her degree in Elementary Education from Messiah College in 1985. She later received her Master of Science, Reading and Education from Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, and her Doctorate of Philosophy in Educational Leadership in 2003 from the University of Miami, Florida.

Dr. Patton had a 24 year career with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, one of the largest school districts in the country which serves over 300,000 students, before becoming Superintendent of Collier County Public Schools in 2011. Since becoming Superintendent, Dr. Patton has revised and improved existing programs by instituting new technological tools in order to increase student achievement. As a champion of technology in the classroom, Dr. Patton was one of a select group of educators invited to Washington, D.C. to speak with the Federal Communications Commission chairman to discuss the transition to digital learning.

Dr. Patton was recently named an eSchool Learning 2014 National Tech-Savvy Superintendent Award Winner. She also received the 2013–2014 Sunshine State School Public Relations Association Outstanding Superintendent Communicator Award. She was named by Gulfshore Business as one of the 41 People with the Most Clout in Southwest Florida and a Power Woman by Florida Weekly Magazine.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Dr. Kamela Patton for her continued service to the Collier County Public Schools, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

RECOGNIZING CHUCK LANZA

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the accomplishments of Chuck Lanza, the outgoing Emergency Management Director for Broward County, Florida.

Mr. Lanza is one of the exemplary professionals responsible for safeguarding the lives of the residents of Broward County, and our community will miss him dearly.

The goal of the Broward County Emergency Management Division is to provide effective emergency management by coordination of public and private resources, development of response plans, implementation of emergency operations, and preparation through training and education.

Chuck Lanza has been a fearless leader in ensuring that our South Florida community is always well prepared and his 28-year career reflects the best of what an emergency management professional should be.

He began his career in 1978 with the Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue Department where he rose to the rank of Deputy Fire Chief.

In 1995 Chuck was named Emergency Manager for Miami-Dade County and remained in that position until 2003.

From 2005 to 2007, Chuck served as the Fire Chief for the Broward Sheriff's Office Department of Fire Rescue, a dual service Fire and EMS Department responsible for regional services including Hazardous Materials, Technical Rescue and Air Rescue.

Before taking over as Broward County's Emergency Management Director in 2008,

Chuck spent a year as Fire Chief for the Seminole Tribe of Florida.

I am particularly grateful for the years I had the opportunity to work directly with Chuck as he helped my constituents and South Floridians prepare for each new hurricane season through education, outreach and resources.

Chuck's commitment to his work and his community led him to the top of his profession. I thank him for his efforts to protect and save the lives of countless Floridians, and for a career dedicated to helping people and strengthening our resolve and our response in the face of natural and man-made disasters. I'm sure I speak on behalf of all South Floridians in wishing him well in his future endeavors.

HONORING RABBI DANIEL MOSCOWITZ

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my condolences to the friends and family of a great spiritual leader and someone I am proud to say was my cherished friend, Rabbi Daniel Moscowitz. Rabbi Moscowitz passed away earlier this month, and his absence leaves an enormous hole to fill in our community.

Rabbi Moscowitz was born on the north side of Chicago and settled in Northbrook to raise his family. The impact that the Rabbi had on our local community is enormous, and the ripples of his influence will continue to be felt for years to come. He founded what is known today as the Tannenbaum Chabad House, which serves Jewish students attending Northwestern University in my home town of Evanston, Illinois. While he served as the Regional Director for Chabad-Lubavitch for the state of Illinois, the organization saw enormous growth—today, it encompasses dozens of centers in over twenty cities all over the state. Rabbi Moscowitz's efforts have meaningfully improved the state of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement in Illinois, in the United States, and around the globe. I am sure that his tremendous leadership will inspire others to continue working to further his vision.

Rabbi Moscowitz distinguished himself time and time again. He served as head of the Chicago Rabbinical Council, and he was an important part of Chabad-Lubavitch's educational division. Rabbi Moscowitz accomplished a great deal in his 59 years, always with a contagious spirit of job, enthusiasm and optimism. In the end, he was taken from us much too soon—I know that he had so much more planned. Rabbi Moscowitz leaves behind a loving wife and nine children, in addition to his parents and siblings.

On behalf of myself and a grateful nation, I want to thank him for all that he's done for the Jewish Community in Illinois and elsewhere. We will miss you, Rabbi.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLENE DILL CAMPBELL

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the passing of one of my constituents—Charlene Dill Campbell. She was a remarkable person who, sadly, leaves behind three beautiful children. Her passing is a tragedy that could have been avoided, and is one I wish I did not have to announce today.

Another one of my constituents, Kathleen Voss Woolrich, Charlene's best friend, wrote down some thoughts about Charlene. I'd like to submit them.

Born in Pennsylvania to a warm family, Charlene moved to Florida when she was 18 years old. She worked at fast food joints and Disney, cleaned houses and babysat, but through the years found herself as a single mother with 3 kids. She had heart issues that needed to be managed. Her teeth needed to be fixed and constantly had infections, but Charlene never complained. She made $11,000 dollars last year—babysitting other peoples' children and cleaning other peoples' houses. She proudly paid her property taxes in February and took care of her little trailer, which she owned and took all three kids to school.

But, Charlene had no health insurance. Charlene was unable to get Obamacare, because she made too little to get the subsidies to purchase health insurance. She had no dental insurance. Her teeth hurt her at night and had so many cavities, but could not find a way to get the decay in her teeth fixed. She was denied Medicaid and when she went to get Obamacare she was told she could not get subsidies.

So she went to the emergency room 2012. She had heart issues and was told to get on medicine and be monitored. But, had no health insurance to do so. 2012 Obama won and we all were so sure. . . NOW Charlene would have health insurance. But the Republican Party of Florida and Rick Scott turned down Medicaid expansion. In December Charlene went to the emergency room with abscesses in her legs. Her teeth hurt her constantly. Charlene never complained. She took her two older kids to school each day and reported for work at her various jobs. Recently she began selling vacuum cleaners in addition to the babysitting and house cleaning. She took antibiotics. She got her healthcare at Florida hospital emergency rooms.

On March 21st, she was supposed to come see me—on my first day off in a while. She was excited about seeing my daughter who she had raised since she was 3. The kids were all going to play together. She had only 2 short appointments in Osceola County, to show the vacuum to customers. At about 4 pm, that afternoon, I got a message from her niece that she had died at the customer's house. They rushed her to Poinciana Medical Center and worked on her. They could not bring my best friend back. She died. She was 32.

You see, the main argument Republicans use is that it's some lazy person who needs Medicaid expansion. That, those of us living without healthcare or dental care are lazy. But my friend, a single beautiful mother, worked 3 jobs. She paid taxes. She paid her house taxes. And now she's dead.

Please think of Charlene when you decide who you are going to vote for in August and December. Please vote for people who want people like Charlene and me to have healthcare—to have a fighting chance.

I am burying my best friend soon, because of Rick Scott and Will Weatherford. I am burying my best friend, because of the policies of the Republican Party. I am burying my best friend, because had Medicaid expansion passed her needs would have been met. She is one of the 7 people who will die each day, because the Florida House of Representatives, Republicans, and Tea Party decided that we are not worth living. We are not worth healthcare. We were not worth Medicaid expansion.

Please vote for Charlene.

I'll never have her back. I'll never see my friend again. I'll never have another day with her.

IN HONOR OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor and recognize the month of March as Women's History Month. The contributions of women to our history and society are too often ignored in favor of narratives that honor men alone. We must highlight the work and accomplishments of our women pioneers such that the next generation aspires to emulate them.

One such instance is the efforts of Lily Ledbetter and her fight against pay discrimination that culminated in President Barack Obama signing the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 into law on January 29, 2009. The law changed the 180-day statute of limitations for filing a pay discrimination lawsuit to reset with each new paycheck in which pay discrimination is alleged. The bill was ultimately passed after the Supreme Court sided with Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company in Lily Ledbetter's pay discrimination suit against them. The act modified the law to clarify that pay discrimination occurs each time someone is subjected to pay discrimination, not just when the initial discriminatory decision is made. Lily Ledbetter's historic fight against pay discrimination ensured workers' would have a better chance to prove pay discrimination based on race, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, as we honor and recognize the month of March as Women's History Month, let us recognize the progress women have made and their myriad accomplishments. We must also rededicate ourselves to preserving and expanding this progress, as well as honoring our past and present female pioneers.

HONORING MS. CARRIE KERSKIE

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History month I rise today to honor Ms. Carrie Kerskie, an outstanding individual and someone who has continuously supported the South Florida community.

Ms. Kerskie is currently President of Marcone Investigations, Inc. and is a highly

sought-after speaker, trainer and consultant specializing in identity theft protection, detection and restoration. Prior to her work with Marcone Investigations she worked for some of the top investment and insurance companies in the country. She is also an accomplished author, penning Your Public Identity; Because Nothing is Private Anymore.

On top of all this, Ms. Kerskie is the founder of the Association of Certified Identity Theft Investigators, and created the Certified Identity Theft Investigator Program. She developed this program after her years of experience working with identity theft victims had given her ample knowledge to develop procedures that greatly reduce the restoration process of these victims, saving them time and money.

Ms. Kerskie's expertise in the identity theft field has made her a featured guest on NBC News, ABC News, and Fox News. She has also written articles, and been highlighted, in Gulfshore Business, Southwest Florida Business Today, PI Magazine, and Adverse Witness. Her tireless efforts have also garnered her recognition, being given the 2010 American Business Women's Associations Neapolitan Chapter ''Woman of the Year'' award, the Harvey R. Morse Founder's Award given for outstanding service to the Florida Association of Private Investigators and the private investigation industry, and in 2009 was selected as one of Gulfshore Business' ''Top 40 Under 40''.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Ms. Carrie Kerskie for her continued service to South Florida and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

PASSAGE OF H.R. 4278

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that I inadvertently voted ''no'' on H.R. 4278, the Ukraine Support Act. As such, my intention was to vote ''yes.'' My ''no'' vote was made in error.

The United States has always stood for democracy, the rule of law and freedom. Passing actions such as H.R. 4278 sends a clear message to the rest of the world that we will not sit idly by and let Russian aggression go unchecked.

I support Ukraine's sovereignty during this turbulent time and sanction those who have sought to undermine its independence and stability. I support H.R. 4278.

HONORING ROBERT C. PENNY

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Robert C. Penny upon his retirement as the Veterans Service Officer for Lake County, California, after nearly twenty years working in the Lake County Veterans Service Office. I thank Mr. Penny for his years of dedicated service to Lake County's veterans as well as their dependents and survivors. His commitment to advocating on behalf of our nation's veterans is both admirable and deserving of recognition.

A veteran himself, Mr. Penny served in the U.S. Navy between July, 1966, and January, 1969, before being disability retired due to injuries he sustained in combat while serving on a River Patrol Boat in Vietnam. For his service, Mr. Penny was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with Two Bronze Stars, the Presidential Unit Commendation Ribbon, the Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Gallantry Cross Medal Color with Palm), the Combat Action Ribbon as well as a Purple Heart.

Mr. Penny's career with the Lake County Veterans Service Office began in September of 1994, when he was brought in as an office assistant. While working in the office, Mr. Penny pursued a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Dominican University, which he received in 1997. It was then that Mr. Penny began to work full time in the Lake County Veterans Service Office, first as a Veterans Service Representative, and later as a Veterans Service Representative II, Assistant California Veterans Service Officer for Lake County and finally, as the Veterans Service Officer. His colleagues remember him as being not only extremely efficient, professional, and hard-working, but also as being unfailingly friendly and cheerful.

Outside of his official duties, Mr. Penny never ceased to serve the veteran community. He is the co-host of a bi-monthly radio show that aims to inform veterans about the benefits they are eligible to receive and to discuss veterans' issues. Mr. Penny also serves as the elected Commander for Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2015 and the Educational Committee Chair for the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers. A tireless public servant, Robert Penny has volunteered extensively with his community's youth, through both the Boy Scouts and Sea Scouts.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we honor and thank Mr. Penny for his invaluable service to Lake County's veterans, their dependents, and survivors. Robert Penny's unyielding dedication to advocating on behalf of our veterans is greatly appreciated by the entire Lake County community and we wish him a most enjoyable retirement.

TRIBUTE TO CELES KING IV

HON. JANICE HAHN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Celes King IV, who passed away in San Diego.

Celes King was an independent and steadfast man of great fortitude. He was the first son of the prolific Civil Rights leader and successful bail bondsman Celes King III, from whom he drew much inspiration. However, rather than merely live in the shadow of his father, his entrepreneurial spirit drove him around the country to start and operate businesses.

Upon his parents' passing, Celes returned to Los Angeles and passionately carried on his father's great work. Despite losing a leg to diabetes, Celes drove his car to Sacramento every week during the state capitol's legislative sessions to advocate for the advancement for his hometown. His leadership abilities then led him to become the President and CEO of the King Central Development Foundation, and the Phoenix Alliance.

In 2003 he was appointed to Congress of Racial Equality of California, the organization his father started nearly forty years ago. Celes served there until his passing. It was an honor to have a significant Civil Rights leader like Celes King IV living in the City of Angels. His legacy lives on and continues to inspire.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the house, join me in a moment of silence to commemorate the life of Celes King IV.

HONORING MS. MARIA CORINA MACHADO

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History month I rise today to honor Maria Corina Machado, an outstanding individual and someone who has been an inspiration to the global community, and Venezuelans everywhere.

Ms. Machado was born on October 7th, 1967 in Caracas. She earned a B.S. in Industrial Engineering from Universidad Catolica Andres Bello, where she graduated first in her class. She obtained her post-graduate degree in Finance from the Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administracion. In 2009 she was invited to attend the Yale World Fellows public policy and leadership program in Connecticut. She was a professor of Human Resources Management at the Industrial Engineering Department of her alma mater and in 2005 received the Meritorious Achievement Award from the Ballenger Foundation.

Ms. Machado is currently a member of the National Assembly of Venezuela for the state of Miranda. She leads the Independent Parliamentary Faction and sits on the Interior Policy Committee. During her tenure as a Member of Parliament, she has been a firm critic of the Hugo Chavez-Nicolas Maduro regime and is a founding member of the opposition political movement, VENTE. She also co-founded SUMATE, Venezuela's leading watchdog for electoral transparency and civil rights. For her role in guiding SUMATE, she has been accused by the Chavez-Maduro government of conspiracy and treason, and was forbidden from leaving the country without judicial authorization for several years. In addition, Ms. Machado ran as an independent candidate in the 2012 Presidential Primaries and was subsequently named Chairwoman of National Movements for the campaign.

Most recently, Ms. Machado spoke at the Organization of American States detailing a firsthand account of the Venezuelan unrest. For this action she lost her seat in the legislature and is no longer immune from prosecution for her alleged role fomenting violence in anti-government protests.

Outside of her professional career, Ms. Machado was the co-founder of Funacion Atenea, a center for the care and rehabilitation of orphaned and at-risk youths. It was the first non-profit organization in Venezuela to employ

a model of public infrastructure and private sector management and financing. She also founded and directed Fundacion Oporttunitas, a private organization that provides financing, technical and operational support to social development programs aimed at children in poverty. She has also sat on board of Siderurgica de Venezuela S.A., and is currently a member of the Venezuelan Chapter of the International Women's Forum.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Ms. Maria Corina Machado for her continued service to Venezuela. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual, and to continue to monitor the ongoing situation in Venezuela, and the tireless efforts of Ms. Machado.

31ST ANNUAL NATIONAL EYE DONOR MONTH—MARCH 2014

HON. AARON SCHOCK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. SCHOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor March 2014 as the 31st annual National Eye Donor Month, a month dedicated to recognizing the need for eye donations as well as honoring eye donors, corneal recipients and their families.

Corneal diseases hamper an individual's ability to see properly. Over time, eye diseases lead to vision impairment or, in the most severe of cases, total blindness. Unfortunately, due to higher medical expenses and lost hours of workforce productivity, eye disorders rank as the fifth costliest type of diseases in the United States.

Thankfully, since 1961 corneal transplants conducted by the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) have allowed over one million people to regain their vision—a success rate of more than 95%! In 2012 alone, 46,684 corneal transplants were performed.

Of the 97 EBAA eye banks, two—the Illinois Eye Bank–Chicago and Illinois Eye Bank–Watson-Gailey in Bloomington—are located in my home state. Because of their hard work, 2,632 corneal donations were made in Illinois in 2012.

One such individual I was made aware of is Caleb. When Caleb was 5 he was injured in an accident that caused him to lose sight out of his right eye. After working with an ophthalmologist, Caleb was able to undergo a corneal transplant that removed the traumatic cataract and restored sight to Caleb's right eye. According to Caleb's mom, ''each new experience he encounters is special because someone had the courage to donate.''

I encourage all Americans to register to become eye donors. Everyone is a universal corneal donor—regardless of age or blood type. Once registered as a corneal donor, one should notify their family of their wishes.

I also urge my colleagues to work with their local eye banks in order to promote the importance of eye donation.

During National Eye Donor Month all Americans should remember the sacrifices made by corneal donors and their families while also celebrating the gifts their sacrifices made to thousands. Additionally, we should celebrate the work of the EBAA and its member banks as they continue to restore the sight of thousands more throughout the U.S.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. GAYLE GLENN

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Gayle Glenn for her outstanding service as the 2013–2014 president of the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO). She completes her term as president of AAO in May of this year.

Born, raised, and educated in Texas, Dr. Glenn earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery at The Dental School at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and her Master of Science in Dentistry at Baylor College of Dentistry in Dallas. She began practicing orthodontics in Dallas in 1984 and, today, treats patients at her Dallas practice she shares with two fellow Baylor College alums who are pediatric dentists. Dr. Glenn's practice focus is pediatric orthodontics. Her effective communication, kindness, and ability to put nervous patients at ease are some of what has contributed to her success treating children and adolescents.

Dr. Glenn has dedicated countless hours to enhancing orthodontics in Dallas, throughout Texas, and across the country over the course of her nearly 30-year career. She has promoted membership in organized dentistry and orthodontics and has helped to transform orthodontics from the perspective of women.

She was recently elected the 2013–2014 president of the AAO, the oldest and largest dental specialty organization in the world. Dr. Glenn is the first female to hold the position of AAO president in the organization's 113-year history.

Dr. Glenn is also a member and past president of the Southwestern Society of Orthodontists and the Texas Association of Orthodontists, and is a member of the American Dental Association, the Greater Dallas Association of Orthodontists, the Texas Orthodontic Study Club, the Texas Dental Association, the Dallas County Dental Society, and the American Association of Women Dentists.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues will join me in commending Dr. Glenn for her service to her patients, her state, to the orthodontic, dental, and medical communities, and, specifically for her service as the first woman president of the AAO.

HONORING UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES ON ITS 120TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor UL on their anniversary of ''making the world safer for 120 years.'' Based in Northbrook, Illinois, in the heart of the district I represent, and with more than 10,000 employees in 40 different countries, UL certifies, validates, tests, inspects, audits, advises and educates. Billions of products bear the universally recognized UL mark.

From humble beginnings in 1894, fire-testing non-combustible insulation materials, UL has grown to encompass seven distinct businesses that industries and governments around the world rely upon to enhance product safety and provide safer work places.

UL's has stayed true to its founding principle to ''promote safe living and working environments'' while achieving consistent growth through innovation and dedication to excellence. In 2013, UL evaluated over 20,000 types of products, produced by 70,000 manufacturers. UL supports approximately 1,500 published safety standards, and UL safety messages reach almost 700 million worldwide.

Through innovative testing, training, research, design, study and outreach, UL strives to make our world a little safer and give workers and families greater peace of mind.

UL works with stakeholders across an impressive breadth of industries, demonstrating the true extent of its reach in promoting and enhancing safety. I am proud that UL calls the Tenth District home and hope they continue to set the global standards for safety for another 120 years.

HONORING THE INCLUSION OF THE WORD ''YOOPER'' IN THE MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

HON. DAN BENISHEK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Steve Parks and proud ''yoopers'' everywhere. Mr. Parks' tireless efforts in Michigan's First Congressional District recently culminated in the addition of the word ''yooper'' to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. A ''yooper'' is a nickname for a native or resident of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Mr. Parks started the campaign to have the word added to the dictionary back in 2002, and his 12 years of writing to the editors finally paid off this week.

Being from the U.P., or Upper Peninsula, I am proud to share in the history that is ''yooper.'' The U.P. has a rich history of mining and logging. It accounts for 29% of the landmass in the state of Michigan and is the only part of Michigan's First Congressional District that has coastline on three of the five Great Lakes. The beauty that is the U.P. can be found in the large number of state and national parks that make up the area, which is why many Michiganders have made it a vacation destination.

I want to thank Mr. Parks for his persistent efforts and local Upper Peninsula pride and congratulate him on having the word ''yooper'' officially added to the dictionary.

CONGRATULATING DR. FAY LOMAX COOK ON HER APPOINTMENT TO THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION AS THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR THE DIRECTORATE FOR SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL & ECONOMIC SCIENCES

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Fay Lomax Cook on being selected by the National Science Foundation to serve as the assistant director for the Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences. Dr. Cook will make an excellent addition to the National Science Foundation where she will help to promote the understanding of people and their lives by supporting research that reveals basic facets of human behavior and helps provide answers to important societal questions and problems.

Dr. Cook is a professor at Northwestern University, where she is a faculty fellow of the Institute for Policy Research and a professor of human development and social policy in the School of Education and Social Policy. From 1996 to 2012, she acted as the director of the Institute for Policy Research, one of America's leading centers of nonpartisan, interdisciplinary, policy-relevant research. Her research focuses on the interrelationships between public opinion and public policy, the politics of public policy, how Americans come together to discuss policy issues, and the dynamics of public support for Social Security and other social programs.

During her time at Northwestern University, Dr. Cook has published many scholarly articles in addition to authoring and co-authoring five books. While actively producing her original contributions to her field she has been the president of the Gerontological Society of America, a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and a visiting scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the tremendous accomplishments of Dr. Fay Lomax Cook and to congratulate her on being selected to serve as the assistant director for NSF's Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences.

HONORING THE REV. CHARLES A. LETT, JR.

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and legacy of the Rev. Charles A. Lett, Jr., an Alabama native and exemplary public servant who passed away on Sunday, March 23, 2014. While we mourn the loss of this passionate man of faith, we are comforted in knowing that his lasting contributions to the state of Alabama and this nation will resonate for generations to come.

Those in my home state will remember Rev. Lett for his role as a timeless pillar in the Selma, Alabama community. As one of our most visible figures, this man of God was a constant source of wisdom and guidance to those he served. Throughout the duration of his extraordinary life, he was forever guided by his faith and his call to ministry.

Rev. Lett was born on September 25, 1914 in Florida to Charles A. Lett Sr. and Mrs. Elizabeth Lett. He was the couple's eighth child and was affectionately known as ''Little Charlie.'' He answered his call into ministry at an early age and went on to attend Selma University where he later earned a Doctorate of Divinity as he continued to grow in his faith and the word of God. He also obtained a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Divinity and a Doctor of Law at Selma University.

Rev. Lett was also a dynamic educator. He earned his teaching certificate from the Alabama State Teachers College before launching a successful career with Baldwin County schools that would span ten years. During that time, he also served as principal of Douglasville High School in Bay Minette, Alabama. He later taught at his beloved Alma Mater, Selma University and was eventually named chairman of the school's board of trustees. He was also a past member and president of the Selma City School Board.

Rev. Lett never relinquished his passion for ministry. Over the course of his influential lifetime, Rev. Lett served as pastor to churches in Baldwin, Monroe and Escambia counties before his journey led him to Green Street Baptist Church in Selma. At the time of his death, he was Pastor Emeritus of Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Selma where he spent many years growing and nurturing his congregation and his lifelong ministry. His commitment to faith and service allowed him to ascend to various leadership positions. He served as president of the Southwest District State Convention for more than 48 years and was past executive secretary of the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

Beyond the walls of the church, Rev. Lett contributed greatly to his community through his work as chaplin of the Selma City Council, president of the Selma Interracial Alliance, and a lifetime member of the local chapter of the NAACP. Rev. Lett was also a member of the board of directors and vice president of Citizens Federal Bank in Birmingham, Alabama.

As we honor this American hero we are reminded of the indelible mark he has left on this nation. We pay homage to his legacy by saluting his notable contributions. This trailblazer taught us that leadership through faith and service can leave a lasting impact. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the life and legacy of the Rev. Charles A. Lett, Jr.

A TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH GARO—28TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT WOMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month. Each year, we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our nation's women. It is an honor to pay homage to outstanding women who are making a difference in my Congressional District. I would like to recognize a remarkable woman, Elizabeth Garo of Echo Park.

For more than two decades, Elizabeth Garo has worked both inside and outside of the music industry. Her love, curiosity and interest in music have been a focus throughout her career, where she has held positions as a band manager and tour manager. Since 2002, she has been a Senior Talent Buyer for the venues Echo and Echoplex in Echo Park and Spaceland Presents. Ms. Garo also curates the music programming for the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County's First Fridays series, the Getty Center's Saturdays Off the 405 Series and is part of the booking team for the Santa Monica Pier's Twilight Concerts series.

In 2008, Elizabeth and her business partner opened Stories Books and Café in Echo Park, where they sell new, used and rare books. Since then, it has become a central gathering spot for the Echo Park community. In addition to literature and fiction, they have strong sections in music, poetry, non-fiction and astrology. They also hold launch parties for small literary publications, storytelling events every month, and showcase art by local artists.

In 2011, Elizabeth and others started the neighborhood festival, Echo Park Rising. Echo Park Rising is launching its fourth year with a strong sense of celebrating the Echo Park neighborhood, its people, music, art and small businesses. Ms. Garo is a member of the Echo Park Chamber of Commerce, and also serves on the Board for Dublab, which is a non-profit web radio collective, devoted to the growth of positive music, culture and arts.

I ask all Members to join me in honoring an exceptional woman of California's 28th Congressional District, Elizabeth Garo.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate passed H.R. 4152, Ukraine Loan Guarantees, as amended.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1781–S1837

Measures Introduced: Twenty bills and six resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2164–2183, S.J. Res. 35, and S. Res. 400–404. **Pages S1818–19**

Measures Reported:

S. 994, to expand the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 to increase accountability and transparency in Federal spending, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 113–139) **Page S1818**

Measures Passed:

Ukraine Loan Guarantees: Senate passed H.R. 4152, to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine, after taking action on the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S1785–92**

Adopted:

By 98 yeas to 2 nays (Vote No. 88), Reid (for Menendez/Corker) Amendment No. 2867, to provide a complete substitute. **Pages S1785–92**

50th Anniversary of the Great Alaska Earthquake: Senate agreed to S. Res. 400, recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Great Alaska Earthquake, which struck the State of Alaska at 5:36 p.m. on Good Friday, March 27, 1964, honoring those who lost their lives in the Great Alaska Earthquake and associated tsunamis, and expressing continued support for research on earthquake and tsunami prediction and mitigation strategies. **Pages S1800–03**

United States International Programming to Ukraine and Neighboring Regions: Senate passed S. 2183, entitled ''United States International Programming to Ukraine and Neighboring Regions''. **Pages S1834–35**

Military and Veterans Caregiver Month: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 395, designating the month of April 2014 as ''Military and Veterans Caregiver Month'', and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1835**

Measures Considered:

Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 3979, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. **Pages S1781–84, S1793, S1799, S1800, S1803**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 65 yeas to 34 nays (Vote No. 90), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Pages S1799–S1800**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that following disposition of H.R. 4302, to amend the Social Security Act to extend Medicare payments to physicians and other provisions of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and when all post-cloture time has expired, Senate vote on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Page S1809**

Appointments:

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the Republican Leader, pursuant to Public Law 105–292, as amended by Public Law 106–55, Public Law 107–228, and Public Law 112–75, appointed the following individuals to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: Mary Ann Glendon of Massachusetts, and M. Zuhdi Jasser of Arizona. **Page S1835**

Protecting Access to Medicare Act—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that following Leader remarks on Monday, March 31, 2014, Senate begin consideration of H.R. 4302, to amend the Social Security Act to extend Medicare payments to physicians and other provisions of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, which was received from the House of Representatives and is at the desk; that there be no amendments, or motions in order to the bill with the exception of budget points of order and the applicable motions to waive; that the time until 5 p.m., be equally divided between the two Leaders, or their designees, for debate on the bill; that notwithstanding the previous order, following the vote on confirmation of the nomination of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, on Monday, March 31, 2014, Senate vote on passage of the bill; that the bill be subject to a 60 affirmative vote threshold; and that upon disposition of the bill, Senate vote on the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 3979, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, as provided under the previous order. **Page S1809**

Owens Nomination—Cloture: Senate continued consideration of the nomination of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit. **Page S1799**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 54 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. 89), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S1799**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 5 p.m. on Monday, March 31, 2014, Senate resume consideration of the nomination, all post-cloture time be considered expired at 5:30 p.m., and Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination. **Page S1793**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

Maria Contreras-Sweet, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration. **Pages S1792–93, S1837**

Matthew H. Tueller, of Utah, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen. **Pages S1800, S1837**

Kathryn B. Thomson, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Department of Transportation. **Pages S1834, S1837**

Messages from the House: **Page S1817**

Measures Referred: **Page S1817**

Executive Communications: **Pages S1817–18**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S1818**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1819–20**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1820–32**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1815–17**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S1832–33**

Notices of Intent: **Page S1833**

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: **Page S1833**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S1833–34**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S1834**

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—90) **Pages S1791–92, S1799–S1800**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:19 p.m., until 2 p.m. on Monday, March 31, 2014. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on Page S1835.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2015 for the Federal Communications Commission, after receiving testimony from Tom Wheeler, Chairman, and Ajit Pai, Commissioner, both of the Federal Communications Commission.

APPROPRIATIONS: FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies concluded open and closed hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, after receiving testimony from James B. Comey, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the posture of the Department of the Navy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from Ray Mabus, Secretary, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, Chief

of Naval Operations, and General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, all of the Department of the Navy, Department of Defense.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Rhea Sun Suh, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, and Janice Marion Schneider, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, both of the Department of the Interior.

Also, committee announced the following subcommittee assignments:

Subcommittee on Energy: Senators Franken (Chair), Wyden, Johnson (SD), Cantwell, Sanders, Stabenow, Udall (CO), Manchin, Heinrich, Baldwin, Risch, Heller, Flake, Alexander, Portman, and Hoeven.

Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining: Senators Manchin (Chair), Wyden, Johnson (SD), Cantwell, Udall (CO), Franken, Schatz, Heinrich, Baldwin, Barrasso, Risch, Lee, Heller, Flake, Scott, Alexander, and Hoeven.

Subcommittee on National Parks: Senators Udall (CO) (Chair), Wyden, Sanders, Stabenow, Schatz, Heinrich, Baldwin, Portman, Barrasso, Lee, Alexander, and Hoeven.

Subcommittee on Water and Power: Senators Schatz (Chair), Johnson (SD), Cantwell, Sanders, Stabenow, Manchin, Franken, Lee, Barrasso, Risch, Heller, Flake, and Scott.

Senators Landrieu and Murkowski are ex officio members of each subcommittee.

MAP–21 REAUTHORIZATION

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine MAP–21 reauthorization, focusing on state and local perspectives on transportation priorities and funding, after receiving testimony from Michael P. Lewis, Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director, Providence; Sue Minter, Vermont Agency of Transportation Deputy Secretary, Montpelier; Mayor Gregory A. Ballard, Indianapolis, Indiana; Mayor Mick Cornett, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Bill Fontenot, St. Landry Parish President, Opelousas, Louisiana; James H. Willox, Converse County Board of County Commissioners Chairman, Douglas, Wyoming, on behalf of the Wyoming County Commissioners Association Committee on Transportation; and Dave Gula, Wilmington Area Planning Council, Newark, Delaware.

POWER AFRICA INITIATIVE

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on African Affairs concluded a hearing to examine powering Africa's future, focusing on the Power Africa Initiative, after receiving testimony from Earl Gast, Assistant Administrator for Africa, United States Agency for International Development; Mimi Alemayehou, Executive Vice President, Overseas Private Investment Corporation; Rick Angiuoni, Director of Africa, Export-Import Bank of the United States; Paul Hinks, Symbion Power LLC, Del Renigar, General Electric, and Thomas H. Hart, The ONE Campaign, all of Washington, D.C.; and Tony O. Elumelu, Heirs Holdings, Lagos, Nigeria.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Sherry Moore Trafford, and Steven M. Wellner, both to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, after the nominees, who were both introduced by Representative Norton, testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine strengthening the Federal Student Loan Program for borrowers, after receiving testimony from James W. Runcie, Chief Operating Officer, Federal Student Aid, Department of Education; Michelle Asha Cooper, Institute for Higher Education Policy, Washington, D.C.; Deanne Loonin, National Consumer Law Center Student Loan Borrower Assistance Project, Boston, Massachusetts; Roberta L. Johnson, Iowa State University, Ames; and Marian Malone Dill, Lee University, Cleveland, Tennessee.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Gregg Jeffrey Costa, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, Tanya S. Chutkan, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, M. Hannah Lauck, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, Leo T. Sorokin, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, and John Charles Cruden, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR THOSE WHO SERVE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Oversight, Federal Rights and Agency Action concluded a hearing to examine access to justice for those who serve, after receiving testimony from Colonel Paul E. Kantwill, Director, Office of Legal Policy, Office of the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Judge Advocate General's Corps, United States

Army, and Dwain Alexander, II, Senior Civilian Attorney, Region Legal Service Office, Mid-Atlantic, and Lieutenant Kenneth Savage, United States Navy Reserve, both of the Department of the Navy, all of the Department of Defense; John S. Odom, Jr., Jones and Odom, L.L.P., Shreveport, Louisiana; and Major General Andrew Davis, USMC (Ret.), Reserve Officers Association, and Ian De Planque, Legislative Commission of the American Legion, both of Washington, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 32 public bills, H.R. 4315–4346; and 5 resolutions, H.J. Res. 113 and H. Res. 526–529 were introduced.

Pages H2743–45

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H2746**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Woodall to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H2699**

Recess: The House recessed at 9:20 a.m. and reconvened at 9:42 a.m. **Page H2700**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014: H.R. 4302, to amend the Social Security Act to extend Medicare payments to physicians and other provisions of the Medicare and Medicaid programs and

Pages H2700–18, H2730

Ukraine Support Act: H.R. 4278, amended, to support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 399 yeas to 19 nays, Roll No. 148.

Pages H2718–30, H2730–31

Recess: The House recessed at 11:24 a.m. and reconvened at 11:31 a.m. **Page H2730**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:32 a.m. and reconvened at 12:07 p.m. **Page H2730**

Meeting Hour: Agreed that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 11 a.m. tomorrow, March 28th; and when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet on Tuesday, April 1st when it shall convene at 12 noon for Morning Hour Debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

Page H2733

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H2736.

Senate Referral: S. 1827 was held at the desk.

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote developed during the proceedings of today and appears on pages H2730–31. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Committee Meetings

APPROPRIATIONS—FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION FY 2015 BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Food and Drug Administration FY 2015 Budget. Testimony was heard from Margaret Hamburg, Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services; Norris W. Cochran, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; and William Tootle, Director of the Office of Budget, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.

APPROPRIATIONS—NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION FY 2015 BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies held a hearing on the National Science Foundation FY 2015 Budget. Testimony was heard from Cora Marrett, Acting Director, National Science Foundation.

APPROPRIATIONS—ARMY FY 2015 BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense held a hearing on United States Army FY 2015 Budget. Testimony was heard from John M. McHugh, Secretary, United States Army; and General Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff, United States Army.

APPROPRIATIONS—ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Environmental Protection Agency Budget. Testimony was heard from Gina McCarthy, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency.

APPROPRIATIONS—VETERANS AFFAIRS FY 2015 BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Veterans Affairs FY 2015 Budget. Testimony was heard from Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary, Veterans Affairs.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE WITHOUT OCO FUNDS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness held a hearing on Operation and Maintenance without OCO Funds: What Now? Testimony was heard from Lieutenant General Burton M. Field, USAF, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans and Requirements, United States Air Force; Lieutenant General James L. Huggins, USA, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, United States Army; Vice Admiral Joseph P. Mulloy, USN, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Integration of Capabilities and Resources (N–8), United States Navy; and Lieutenant General Glenn M. Walters, USMC, Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources, United States Marine Corps.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications held a markup on H.R. 3283, the ''Integrated Public Alert and Warning System Modernization Act of 2013''; H.R. 4263, the ''Social Media Working Group Act of 2014''; and H.R. 4289, the ''Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act.'' H.R. 3283 and H.R. 4263 were forwarded to the Full Committee, as amended. H.R. 4289 was forwarded to the Full Committee, without amendment.

OVER-FEDERALIZATION

Committee on the Judiciary: Over-Criminalization Task Force held a hearing on Over-federalization. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

ADVANCES IN EARTHQUAKE SCIENCE: 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT ALASKAN QUAKE

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled ''Advances in Earthquake Science: 50th Anniversary of the Great Alaskan Quake''. Testimony was heard from William Leith, Senior Science Advisor for Earthquake and Geologic Hazards, U.S. Geological Survey; and public witnesses.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs held a hearing on H.R. 4002, to revoke the charter of incorporation of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma at the request of that tribe, and for other purposes; and H.R. 3822, the ''Fort Wingate Land Division Act of 2014''. Testimony was heard from Kevin Washburn, Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior; Representative Luján (NM); and public witnesses.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Space held a hearing entitled ''A Review of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Budget for Fiscal Year 2015.'' Testimony was heard from Charles F. Bolden, Jr., Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on the following legislation: H.R. 183, the ''Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act''; H.R. 2527, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide veterans with counseling and treatment for sexual trauma that occurred during inactive duty training; H.R. 2661, the ''Veterans Access to Timely Medical Appointments Act''; H.R. 2974, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the eligibility for beneficiary travel for veterans seeking treatment or care for military sexual trauma in specialized outpatient or residential programs at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; H.R. 3508, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the qualifications of hearing aid specialists of the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; H.R. 3180, to amend title 38, United States Code, to include contracts and grants for residential care for veterans in the exception to the requirement that the Federal Government recover a portion of the value of certain projects; H.R. 3387, the ''Classified Veterans Access to Care Act''; H.R. 3831, the ''Veterans Dialysis Pilot Program Review Act of 2014''; H.R. 4198, the ''Appropriate Care for Disabled Veterans Act''; and legislation to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes. Testimony was heard

from Madhulka Agarwal, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary, Health, Policy and Services, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and the following Representatives: Sinema; Titus; Grimm; Walorski; Duffy; Roe (TN) and Denham.

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 FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2014

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

2 p.m., Monday, March 31

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: Senate will begin consideration of H.R. 4302, Protecting Access to Medicare Act.

At 5 p.m., Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, with a vote on confirmation of the nomination at approximately 5:30 p.m. Following which, Senate will vote on or in relation to H.R. 4302, Protecting Access to Medicare Act, and the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 3979, Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

11 a.m., Friday, March 28

House Chamber

Program for Friday: The House will meet in pro forma session at 11 a.m.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Beniskey, Dan, Mich., E465
Burgess, Michael C., Tex., E464
Coffman, Mike, Colo., E460
Davis, Danny K., Ill., E462
Diaz-Balart, Mario, Fla., E457, E459, E461, E462, E463, E464
Frelinghuysen, Rodney P., N.J., E458, E461
Grayson, Alan, Fla., E459, E463
Green, Al, Tex., E463
Hahn, Janice, Calif., E464
Honda, Michael M., Calif., E461
Lewis, John, Ga., E458
Lipinski, Daniel, Ill., E466
Matsui, Doris O., Calif., E458
Michaud, Michael H., Me., E462
Norton, Eleanor Holmes, D.C., E460
Poe, Ted, Tex., E457
Rogers, Mike, Ala., E462
Schakowsky, Janice D., Ill., E463
Schiff, Adam B., Calif., E466
Schneider, Bradley S., Ill., E465
Schock, Aaron, Ill., E465
Sessions, Pete, Tex., E465
Sewell, Terri A., Ala., E466
Thompson, Mike, Calif., E464
Upton, Fred, Mich., E457
Wasserman Schultz, Debbie, Fla., E462

Congressional Record

The *Congressional Record* (USPS 087–390). The Periodicals postage is paid at Washington, D.C. The public proceedings of each House of Congress, as reported by the Official Reporters thereof, are printed pursuant to directions of the Joint Committee on Printing as authorized by appropriate provisions of Title 44, United States Code, and published for each day that one or both Houses are in session, excepting very infrequent instances when two or more unusually small consecutive issues are printed one time. ¶Public access to the *Congressional Record* is available online through the U.S. Government Printing Office, at *www.fdsys.gov*, free of charge to the user. The information is updated online each day the *Congressional Record* is published. For more information, contact the GPO Customer Contact Center, U.S. Government Printing Office. Phone 202–512–1800, or 866–512–1800 (toll-free). E-Mail, *contactcenter@gpo.gov*. ¶To place an order for any of these products, visit the U.S. Government Online Bookstore at: bookstore.gpo.gov. Mail orders to: Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197–9000, or phone orders to 866–512–1800 (toll-free), 202–512–1800 (D.C. area), or fax to 202–512–2104. Remit check or money order, made payable to the Superintendent of Documents, or use VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, or GPO Deposit Account. ¶Following each session of Congress, the daily *Congressional Record* is revised, printed, permanently bound and sold by the Superintendent of Documents in individual parts or by sets. ¶With the exception of copyrighted articles, there are no restrictions on the republication of material from the *Congressional Record*.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Superintendent of Documents, *Congressional Record*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, along with the entire mailing label from the last issue received.