

an important designation for Vermont. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System recognizes and preserves rivers with remarkable scenic and recreational value. With the passage of this legislation, Vermont will join 40 other States with designated national wild and scenic rivers. This designation of the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers is the capstone of more than 7 years of work, including intense study and planning by the local communities that want to protect the natural, cultural, and recreational qualities of these rivers.

This defense authorization bill is not perfect; politics as much as policy makes that the case. I am disappointed that this authorization fails to build on important progress made last year to streamline the transfer of detainees from Guantanamo Bay and move closer to finally shuttering the detention facility there. This compromise bill will maintain the status quo by continuing to prohibit the transfer of detainees to the United States for detention or trial. I am disappointed that a provision contained in the Senate Armed Services Committee version of the authorization that would have provided exceptions to this prohibition was removed during negotiations. However, I am pleased that the bill does not contain the statutory ban on detainee transfers to Yemen that also was contained in the Senate bill.

As long as the detention facility at Guantanamo remains open, it serves as a recruitment tool for terrorists, and tarnishes America's historic role as a champion of human rights. The prison facility at Guantanamo remains a tremendous waste of taxpayer dollars—costing this country billions of dollars at a time when budgets are tight and that money is needed elsewhere. Closing Guantanamo is the morally responsible thing to do; my commitment on that has not wavered.

With regard to some of the provisions included in this bill that relate to combatting the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), I expect the Department of Defense to abide by the Leahy law. These terrorists pose a threat to the United States and to our partners; they must be stopped and brought to justice. But we cannot ignore our own laws or permit the United States to be implicated, either directly or indirectly, in gross violations of human rights when we support either governments or irregular forces in the fight against ISIS.

There have been multiple reports that some in the Iraqi Army and the militias they fight alongside engage in reprehensible conduct similar to the barbaric crimes of ISIS. As a matter of law and policy, we must condemn this. I cannot—and will not—support any effort to weaken the application of the Leahy law to the Iraqi Army or to any entity it is aligned with.

As in every defense authorization bill, there are things in here that I support and things I wish were not in here.

Compromise is inherent in this process. But we cannot forsake our principles and ideals when it comes to supporting our national defense and the men and women who serve. I will support this compromise bill and remain committed to ensuring that we preserve the values that make this Nation a beacon of civil and human rights around the globe.

Madam President, I am grateful that the fiscal year 15 National Defense Authorization Act includes an important designation for Vermont. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers system recognizes and preserves rivers with remarkable scenic and recreational value. With the passage of this legislation, Vermont will join 40 other States with designated National Wild and Scenic Rivers. Designation of the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers is the capstone of more than 7 years of work, including intense study and planning by the local communities who want to protect the natural, cultural and recreational qualities of these rivers.

This has not been a Federal-led initiative; instead it was an occasion for Vermont citizens to work together. The communities along the rivers contacted me in 2006 to request the initial Federal study for this designation. The decision to move ahead was made by local communities that agreed to specific goals and priorities for these two rivers. This designation was put to a vote at the communities' town meetings and was approved by every town that is included in the legislation.

National Wild and Scenic status for these rivers will help the local communities promote recreational use, while also protecting the rights and values of landowners who make their homes and livings on the banks of these rivers. I am proud that this process has been driven by the impacted communities, working to ensure that the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers will forever be enjoyed by fishermen, hunters, and paddlers and that water quality will be protected. The benefits will extend downstream as far as Lake Champlain and beyond.

Ms. MIKULSKI. 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. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 130, the short-term, 2-day continuing resolution, which was received from the House and is now at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 130) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2015, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the joint resolution be read three times and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the joint resolution.

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

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading, and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 130) was passed.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to consider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—Continued

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent that at noon on Friday, December 12, tomorrow, all postcloture time on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3979 be considered expired; that it be in order, notwithstanding cloture having been invoked, for Senator COBURN to offer a motion to refer the House message; that there be 3 hours of debate, 1 hour each for Senators COBURN and REID, or their designees, and 30 minutes each for Senators MURKOWSKI and INHOFE, or their designees, prior to a vote in relation to the motion to refer; that the Coburn motion to refer be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold; that if the Coburn motion to refer is not agreed to, Senator COBURN be recognized for the purposes of making a motion; that following disposition of the Coburn motion, the pending motion to concur with a further amendment be withdrawn; that the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to concur; that no motions other than the Coburn motions, motions to waive or motions to table be in order; that the vote on the motion to concur be subject to a 60-affirmative vote threshold; finally, that if the motion to concur is agreed to, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following concurrent resolutions en bloc: H. Con. Res. 121, to correct the enrollment of H.R. 3979, providing a new title to the bill; and H. Con. Res. 123, to correct the enrollment of H.R. 3979; that the concurrent resolutions be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.